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# A FAIR CONSPIRATOR

MARIE DE ROHAN DUCHESSE DE CHEVREUSE

H.NOEL WILLIAMS



**This One**



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# **A FAIR CONSPIRATOR**









*Marie de Rohan.  
Duchesse de Chevreuse.  
after the engraving by Lardet.*

# **A FAIR CONSPIRATOR**

**MARIE DE ROHAN,  
DUCHESS OF CHEVREUSE**

**BY  
H. NOEL WILLIAMS**

**AUTHOR OF "A PRINCESS OF ADVENTURE"**

**WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTOGRAPHURE  
AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS**

**NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1913**



**TO  
MY WIFE**



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# A FAIR CONSPIRATOR

## CHAPTER I

Prominent position of women in the public life of France during the first half of the seventeenth century—Observation of Mazarin concerning them—Marie de Rohan, Duchesse de Chevreuse—Her beauty—Her remarkable abilities—Her taste for gallantry the cause of her political intrigues—Opinions of La Rochefoucauld and Retz concerning her—Her birth and parentage—She becomes maid-of-honour to Anne of Austria—Early dislike of the Queen for her future favourite—The Duc de Luynes proposes for her hand—Character and astonishing good-fortune of this personage—Marriage of Luynes and Mlle. de Rohan—Madame de Luynes appointed *Surintendante de la maison de la Reine*—Feminine revolt provoked by this nomination—Dismissal of the Queen's Spanish attendants—Consummation of the royal marriage—The Queen admits her *Surintendante* to the closest intimacy—Happiness of Madame de Luynes's married life—She gives birth to a son—Her husband appointed Constable of France—His failure before Montauban—His death—His widow marries the Duc de Chevreuse—Character of this prince—An unfortunate frolic—Temporary disgrace of Marie de Rohan.

IN no period of French history do we find women taking a more active part in public life than in the first half of the seventeenth century. During the troublous reign of Louis XIII. and the minority of *le Grand Monarque* there was no revolt or conspiracy in which some great lady of the Court was not more or less directly concerned. Prime Ministers recognised their power and courted and persecuted them by turns ; for love of their *beaux yeux* men plunged into rash and foolish enterprises, which led them to ruin, exile, and even to



the block ; they entered into treasonable negotiations with foreign Governments ; they plotted rebellions, planned assassinations, and "created more confusion than ever existed in Babylon." When, at the conclusion of the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1660, the Spanish Prime Minister, Don Luis de Haro, felicitated Mazarin on the repose which he was about to enjoy after so many storms, the Cardinal replied that no Minister was able to promise himself repose in France, and that even the women there were the cause of infinite trouble. "You Spaniards," said he, "are happy. You have two kinds of women : plenty of coquettes and a few good women. The one wishes to please her gallants, the other her husband. They have no desire save for luxury and display, and they would be bewildered if you talked to them of politics. But in France it is not the same. Our women, whether chaste or gallant, young or old, wise or foolish, wish to have a hand in everything. A woman will not retire to rest until she has talked over affairs of State with her lover or her husband. They wish to manage everything, to embroil everything. We have three who are capable of governing or overturning three great kingdoms : the Duchesse de Longueville, the Princess Palatine, and the Duchesse de Chevreuse."

The last of the three ladies mentioned by Mazarin, Marie de Rohan, Duchesse de Luynes, and afterwards Duchesse de Chevreuse, is perhaps the most interesting feminine personality of her time. All the memoirs and letters of her contemporaries speak with admiration of her beauty—that beauty which made a great part of her destiny. The greatest painters have painted her portrait ; the most skilful engravers of an epoch which counted many excellent ones have reproduced her features. With a charming oval face, a complexion of dazzling fairness, large, expressive blue eyes, a wealth of glossy auburn hair,

and "the shape of a goddess," few lovelier women ever graced the Court of France, and her loveliness was enhanced by the gaiety, vivacity, and *entrain* which, we are told, "not only shone in her eyes, but animated her voice and her gestures, even to her least movements, and imparted to her whole personality an irresistible charm."

To these remarkable personal attractions she joined hardly less remarkable abilities : a keen intelligence, which enabled her readily to grasp intricate questions of finance and high politics far beyond the comprehension of the majority of her sex, a prompt resolution, a tireless energy, and a courage which never failed her, even in the most difficult circumstances. "Madame de Chevreuse, in fact, possessed nearly all the qualities of the great politician," observes Victor Cousin ; "one alone was lacking to her, and it was precisely that without which all the others turn to ruin : she did not know how to mark out for herself a definite end, or rather she did not choose it for herself ; it was another who chose it for her. She was a woman in the highest degree ; there lay her strength and also her weakness. Her first province was love, or rather gallantry, and the interest of him whom she loved became her principal object. That is the explanation of the prodigies of sagacity, ingenuity, and energy which she displayed in the pursuit of a chimerical end, which ever recoiled before her, and seemed to draw her on by the prestige even of difficulty and peril."<sup>1</sup> La Rochefoucauld accuses her of having brought misfortune to all whom she loved ; but, in more than one instance, it was the latter who precipitated her into their own foolish enterprises, and she cannot therefore be held responsible for the disasters which overtook them. According to Madame de Motteville, Madame de Chevreuse herself declared that "ambition had never touched her heart, and that her pleasure alone

<sup>1</sup> *Madame de Chevreuse.*

had guided her, that is to say, that she had been interested in the affairs of the world solely in relation to those whom she loved.”<sup>1</sup> And this is confirmed by the Cardinal de Retz in the far from indulgent portrait which he has left us of the lady :

“She abandoned herself to politics, because she abandoned herself to everything which pleased him whom she loved. If the Prior of the Carthusians had pleased her, she would have become a recluse in all sincerity. . . . Never did any one pay less heed to dangers, and never had woman more contempt for scruples and for duties ; she knew none save that of pleasing her lover.”<sup>2</sup>

What, however, is indisputable, is that for more than thirty years Madame de Chevreuse was one of the most important factors in French politics ; that Richelieu made every effort to win her over to his interests, and, being unsuccessful, treated her as an enemy worthy of him, and banished her several times ; that, after the great Cardinal’s death, when Louis XIII. opened the doors of France to all the proscribed, he closed them against her ; and that she proved almost as formidable an enemy to Mazarin as she had to Richelieu, until, towards the end of the Fronde, the Minister prudently determined to be reconciled with her and to profit by her counsels.

Marie de Rohan was born almost with the seventeenth century, in December 1600. She came of one of the oldest and most illustrious of the princely families of Brittany, which descended in a direct line from the ancient sovereigns of that portion of France, and bore the proud device : “*Roy ne puits, duc ne daigne, Rohan suys.*” Her father was Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon, a zealous servant of Henri IV., *pair de France* and Grand Huntsman, Governor of Paris and of the Île-de-France ;

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*.

her mother, Madeleine de Lenoncourt, sister of Urbain de Laval, the Maréchal de Bois-Dauphine, died when Marie was still a child. Concerning the girl's early years the chroniclers are silent, and we hear nothing about her until the marriage of Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria at the end of 1615, when she was appointed one of the young Queen's maids-of-honour. Singularly enough, the future confidante and close ally of Anne of Austria did not at first commend herself to her royal mistress, reared as the latter had been in the most cramping conditions of Spanish etiquette; indeed, her Majesty was extremely shocked by the liberty which the young lady permitted her witty and somewhat malicious tongue, and by, what seemed to her, the reprehensible freedom of her intercourse with the opposite sex. Some eighteen months passed thus, and then, in the summer of 1617, the Court learned that Mlle. de Montbazon's hand had been demanded in marriage by M. de Luynes, that audacious favourite of Louis XIII., who had just engineered the *coup d'état* whereby he had destroyed Marie de' Medici's Italian *protégé*, the Maréchal d'Ancre, despatched the Queen-Mother into exile at Blois, and gathered the reins of government into his own hands.

Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes, is one of the misunderstood personages of history. For long historians persisted in seeing in him nothing but a vulgar favourite, who used the influence which he had acquired over a weak-willed young king merely to accumulate honours and wealth for himself and his relatives. Thanks, however, to the researches of Victor Cousin and M. Zeller, we are now able to form a more just appreciation of his character, and to see him as he really was—a bold and capable statesman and a loyal servant of the Crown, who, without possessing those attributes of greatness which merit the respect and admiration of posterity, nevertheless, rendered

valuable services to the State, and continued the work which Henri IV. had begun and which Richelieu was to conclude.

The good-fortune of Luynes had been indeed astonishing. The eldest of the three sons of an old companion-in-arms of Henri IV., known as the Capitaine du Luynes, he was appointed page to the King, whose services, however, he exchanged, as soon as he had arrived at man's estate, for that of the Comte du Lude. Some years later, he re-entered the royal service, and was attached to the person of the little Louis XIII. This was the turning-point in his fortunes, for very soon he discovered the secret of making himself agreeable to the young prince, who took more pleasure in his society than in that of any of his other attendants. His growing favour aroused the jealousy of the King's *gouverneur*, the Marquis de Souvré, and he narrowly escaped being banished from Court, in which case it is probable that nothing more would have been heard of him. He succeeded, however, in averting the storm, and little by little established himself so firmly in the good graces of Louis XIII. that his Majesty could not endure to be separated from him. A little later, when menaced by Marie de' Medici and the Maréchal d'Ancre, he had the art to disarm their suspicions by his apparent subservience ; but no sooner had Louis XIII. attained his majority, than he began to urge him to free himself from the tutelage of his mother and her Italian favourite and become really King. Then, when he had brought the young monarch to the required pitch of exasperation against those who had usurped his authority, he threw aside the mask, placed himself at the head of a military conspiracy, and swept his enemies from his path (April 24, 1617).

And so the "poor little cadet of Albert," who had begun by amusing his young master by his skill in snaring

maggies and training falcons, became Prime Minister of France and the grandest gentleman in all the realm. Honours and gifts were heaped upon him. He received the marquissate of Ancre, the name of which was changed to Albert ; he was made Grand Falconer, First Gentleman of the Chamber, Governor of Picardy, Lieutenant-Governor of the Île-de-France, Captain of the Tuileries and of the Bastile ; and those who had hitherto scarcely deigned to notice his existence now bowed down before the resplendency of his power. One thing alone was wanting to him : a wife whose rank should accord with the altitude of his fortune, who should connect him with the greatest families in France, and give him children to inherit his wealth and honours.

Louis XIII., who did not wish to place any limits to his favours to Luynes, proposed to him one of the greatest heiresses in France, his natural half-sister, Henriette de Vendôme. Aware that the project was not likely to be very agreeable to that princess, who entertained a most exalted idea of her own merits, he invited the Queen, with whom Mlle. de Vendôme was a great favourite, to speak to her about it, authorising her Majesty to promise on behalf of Luynes the very highest dignities it was within his power to bestow, and even the office and insignia of Constable of France. "The Queen," writes the Tuscan Envoy, "not only to please the King, but also to manifest in this way her good offices to Luynes, of whom, for her own interests, she desired to secure the support, and to whom she testified all her confidence, willingly undertook this negotiation, and spoke of the matter several times to Mlle. de Vendôme. But the latter showed that she did not wish to hear anything about it, giving as her reason the great distance between her and Luynes, affirming that she would not consent to it, and saying that, on the day when she saw herself con-

strained, she would prefer to enter a monastery. The Queen was much annoyed ; but, after this, she was unwilling to cause any further vexation to this princess, who had, besides, never thought of marrying any one else than the Duc du Maine.”<sup>1</sup>

Luynes was too astute to make any attempt to overcome the repugnance of Mlle. de Vendôme, and turned to seek a wife elsewhere. There was quite a number of young ladies whose rank and fortune rendered them worthy of his consideration, but none who could compare in personal attractions with Mlle. de Montbazon ; and it was upon her that his choice fell. At his request, Louis XIII. sent for the Duc de Montbazon and informed him of the honour which the favourite proposed to do him. The duke no doubt had his own opinion as to the side on which the honour lay ; but, since he was, like a good many other great nobles, a devout worshipper at the shrine of the rising sun, he prudently kept it to himself, and gave a cordial consent. He was, it seems, already assured of the consent of his daughter, without which he would scarcely have been so ready to agree to the proposal, being a good-natured, feeble kind of man and completely under the domination of that high-spirited young lady. But M. de Luynes, though now in his fortieth year, was one of the most fascinating men at the Court, “with a countenance so agreeable that it served him as a general letter of credit for all kinds of affairs and to all kinds of people” ; and the glamour with which his astonishing rise to fortune had surrounded him was naturally calculated to appeal to damsels of romantic temperament.

Luynes neglected nothing to win the good graces of his lady-love. He showered upon her the most costly

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of May 16, 1617, cited by Armand Baschet, *le Roi chez la Reine*.

gifts, obtained a promise from the King that, when she should be a little older, she should be appointed *Surintendante de la maison de la Reine*, an office which conferred almost absolute power over the Queen's Household, and secured for her, on the eve of their marriage, the *tabouret* —the right of being seated in the presence of the Queen —a privilege which was not enjoyed, save by the special favour of the King, by any lady below the rank of a duchess. Finally, when the marriage took place on September 13, 1617, in the royal chapel at the Louvre, the bride found in her *corbeille* the magnificent diamonds of the Maréchale d'Ancre's hapless wife, beheaded some months before on the Place de Grève, "for high treason, both human and divine."<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of the following year, the King duly fulfilled the promise he had made to Luynes and created his wife *Surintendante* of the Queen's Household. The appointment of a young woman not yet eighteen to so exalted and so responsible a post was severely criticised, and aroused something like a revolt among the Queen's ladies. The Dowager-Duchesse de Montmorency, who up to that moment had held the title of *première dame du palais*, was highly indignant and immediately gave in her resignation, "on the ground that, being the widow of the late Connétable de Montmorency, it was impossible for her to retain a subordinate post in the Royal Household." Anne's Spanish attendants were still more incensed; the *camerara mayor*, the Countess de las Torres, loudly protested against Madame de Luynes's assumption of authority over her, and she and the old Duchess de Villequieras, her Majesty's former *gouvernante*, so worked upon the feelings of their mistress that it was only with great

<sup>1</sup> These diamonds, which had been given by the King to Luynes, are said to have been of enormous value, for diamonds were, in those days, purchased for an investment, as well as for ornament.



difficulty that she could be persuaded to accept the services of the *Surintendante*.

This squabble had an important result ; it brought about the departure of the Spanish attendants, and, in so doing, hastened the consummation of the royal marriage, to which Louis XIII. still refused to consent, notwithstanding all the arguments and entreaties that were addressed to him. The King had conceived a violent aversion to "these widows who were dressed like nuns," and, in particular, to the Duchess de Villequieras ; and so indignant was he at their intrigues that he abstained from visiting his consort for several days, and declared that he was firmly resolved not to live with her as a husband until the departure of the favourites who had so shamefully abused her confidence.

Luynes, accordingly, lost no time in making the strongest representations to the Spanish Ambassador, the Duke de Monteleone, and, shortly afterwards, all the Queen's Spanish attendants were recalled, with the exception of her confessor, a physician, and a waiting-woman, "who had become wholly French."

According to the Papal Nuncio, Luynes had given Monteleone "positive assurances" that the marriage should be consummated after the departure of the Spanish ladies. Since, however, the bashful monarch still hesitated, the favourite determined to take the matter into his own hands. We read in Hérourard's *Journal*, under date January 5, 1619 :

"[The King] went to bed. Prayed to God. At eleven o'clock or thereabouts, without the King expecting it, M. de Luynes came to persuade him to sleep with the Queen. He resisted, strong and firm, struggling even to tears ; is carried there, put to bed. . . ."

Contrary to general anticipation, the youthful Madame de Luynes made a most admirable *Surintendante*, and the

Queen's Household under her sway was a model of order and decorum. Nevertheless, she did not succeed in gaining the favour of her royal mistress, who continued to treat her in a very cold and distant manner. The explanation of this is that a rumour had reached the Queen's ears that the King was paying Madame de Luynes such marked attentions as to give rise to the belief that he had fallen in love with her, and this naturally did not incline her to regard the lady with a benevolent eye. "The King," writes the Spanish Ambassador to Philip III., "abounds in courtesies and attentions for the Duchesse de Luynes ;<sup>1</sup> I have nevertheless good hope that the worst suspicions take rise only in the excited fancy of the Infanta-Queen and in the malicious tattlings of her women. The King, I believe, is too wise and virtuous to merit the imputation of criminal intrigue. Your Majesty should exhort the Queen to propitiate her husband, and to render herself agreeable and necessary to him by the thousand little coquetries proper to enchain and entice volatile hearts."<sup>2</sup>

In point of fact, the intimacy between Louis XIII. and Madame de Luynes was of the most innocent character. The latter was warmly attached to her husband, and, if she encouraged the attentions of the King, it was no doubt solely from the amusement she derived from his gauche efforts at flirtation ; while as for Louis XIII., even that incorrigible scandal-monger Tallemant des Réaux is feign to confess that "*il n'eut jamais l'esprit de faire le Connétable c. . .*" But there are always persons whose interest it is to place the worst construction upon the most harmless gallantries, and,

<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1619, in recognition of the favourite's services in negotiating the reconciliation between Louis XIII. and the Queen-Mother, the King had erected the county of Maillé into a duchy-peerage under the name of Luynes.

<sup>2</sup> Published by Martha Freer : "The Married Life of Anne of Austria."

thanks to their efforts, it was some time before the Queen was persuaded that Madame de Luynes was not endeavouring to lure his Majesty away from her.

When, at length, Anne recognised the folly of her suspicions, her sentiments towards her *Surintendante* speedily underwent a change and, as though anxious to make amends for her injustice, she yielded herself unreservedly to the charm which the latter seemed to exercise over every one with whom she was brought into close relationship. It would, as we shall see hereafter, have been infinitely better for herself and a good many others if the Queen had continued to keep Madame de Luynes at a distance.

Madame de Luynes appears to have been very happy in her married life. She lived on the most affectionate terms with her husband, and espoused his interests with that zeal which she always displayed on behalf of those who gained her heart.

In the autumn of 1618, she gave birth to a daughter, who afterwards entered religion and became Abbess of Maubuisson, and on the night of Christmas Day 1620, to the great joy of Luynes, she presented him with a son. The Queen, we are informed by the Venetian Ambassador, Contarini, never quitted the duchess for a single moment during the pains of labour, and sat by her bedside the whole night.

The bells of all the churches in Paris were immediately rung in celebration of this event, and several couriers started to carry the glad tidings to Calais, whither Luynes had recently accompanied the King to inspect the fortifications of the harbour, which had been greatly damaged by a violent gale. Louis XIII. was the first to receive the news, and so pleased was he that he gave the bearer a present of 4,000 écus, and undertook to announce it to his favourite. Before doing so, however, he gave orders

for all the guns of the citadel to be discharged, and when Luynes inquired the reason of this, embraced him and exclaimed : "My cousin, I am come to rejoice with you because you have a son." The two friends at once returned to Paris, where his Majesty stood godfather to the child, who received the name of Louis Charles. This little boy became the second Duc de Luynes, who enjoyed some celebrity in the latter part of the seventeenth century, through his connection with Port-Royal, translated into French the *Méditations* of Descartes, wrote under a *nom de guerre* several books of devotion, and was the father of the pious Duc de Chevreuse, the friend of Fénelon.

Contarini, in announcing this auspicious event to his Government, observed that the Duc de Luynes "seemed to have enchained Fortune"; and certainly, since the *coup d'état* which had brought him from comparative obscurity to the head of the State, his career had been an almost unbroken series of successes. Without resorting to proscription or the scaffold, he had compelled the great nobles, incessantly in revolt, to lay down their arms and acknowledge the royal authority, and had attached his name to the first serious effort to reduce the Protestants to the condition of other Frenchmen. He had resumed the vigorous foreign policy of Henri IV. and protected the independent States of Italy from Spanish aggression; put an end, for a time at least, to the unfortunate divisions in the Royal Family which were to be the cause of so much turmoil and bloodshed in years to come; induced the King to extend to his consort some of the consideration and affection which were her due; negotiated splendid alliances for his brothers<sup>1</sup>; married a

<sup>1</sup> His second brother, the Seigneur de Cadenet, married the daughter and heiress of the Duc de Pecquigny, and was made Duc de Chaulnes; the youngest, the Seigneur de Brantès, married Charlotte Marguerite, only daughter of the Duc de Luxembourg, whose title he eventually bore.

beautiful young woman, whom he loved and who loved him, founded a family, and assured the future of his house.

"If," observes Victor Cousin, "he had died at the end of the year 1620, he would have died at the height of prosperity, a rare example of a good fortune which had remained constant through so many stormy and often tragic adventures; and this constancy of success, which is almost as potent with posterity as with contemporaries, would have been for him an aureole in history. . . . But Providence had disposed otherwise, and was reserving for Luynes trials before which his star was to wane and his good fortune to succumb."

Early in 1621 it began to be apparent that Luynes was gradually losing the place he had so long held in the favour of the King. Louis XIII., in fact, was growing weary of the domination of the man whom he had raised so high, and was becoming jealous of his power and display. "There is the King!" exclaimed he one day, as Luynes passed before his windows, followed by a splendid retinue. And on another, seeing the English Ambassador alight from his coach and enter the favourite's hôtel, he exclaimed bitterly: "Ah! he is going to have an audience of *le Roi* Luynes." Nevertheless, the habit of years was too strong to be easily broken; and when, at the beginning of April, at the moment of entering on the campaign against the revolted Huguenots, Luynes demanded the sword of Constable of France, the King conferred it upon him with the utmost pomp, although it had been already promised to the Maréchal de Lesdiguières, on condition that he should abjure the Protestant faith, which he had engaged to do. That the sword which had been borne by such warriors as Du Guesclin, Clisson, Buchan, Saint-Pol, the Duc de Bourbon, and Anne de Montmorency should be bestowed upon the

hero of an assassination, who could not drill a company of infantry, enacted universal astonishment and disgust ; and Luynes's exchange of the rôle of statesman for that of general was attended with disastrous results for the forces which he commanded. Instead of attempting the reduction of La Rochelle, the capital of the insurrection, which would have been a comparatively easy task, since, on the side of the sea, it had not, on this occasion, any assistance to hope for from the English fleet, he resolved to attack the energetic and warlike Protestants of the South, commanded by the best officers of the party. The royal army occupied Saumur and took Saint-Jean-d'Angely, but it wore itself out in fruitless efforts to reduce Montauban, heroically defended by the Marquis de la Force and the Huguenot pastor Charmière, and, after sustaining terrible losses, was obliged to raise the siege.

This reverse was largely due to the incapacity of Luynes, nor was his lack of military skill redeemed by any proof of personal courage. Indeed, he appears to have been exceedingly careful to keep out of the way of danger ; and a hill well beyond the range of the enemy's fire, from which he was accustomed to watch the operations, was nicknamed "*la Connétable*."

During the progress of the siege, Luynes's favour with his royal master steadily declined, and it was the general belief that his reign was drawing to a close. The change in the King's sentiments towards him manifested itself in sneers at his ignorance of warfare, and sometimes in sarcastic and spiteful remarks concerning his private affairs, in which even the reputation of his beautiful wife was not spared. Bassompierre relates that Louis one day told the Constable, before a number of courtiers, that the Duc de Chevreuse was desperately enamoured of Madame de Luynes, and warned him to be on his guard. When the Constable had retired, the writer ventured to

remonstrate with the King. "Sire," said he, "I have heard that it ranks as heinous sin to sow dissension between husband and wife." To which his Majesty replied that he hoped that God would pardon him, but that he had been unable to resist the temptation to annoy *M. le Connétable*.

Encouraged by the attitude of the King, and incensed by the belief that Luynes intended to make peace with the Protestants, Louis XIII.'s Jesuit confessor, Père Arnoux, joined with Puiseaux, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an endeavour to procure the overthrow of the Constable. But Luynes ascertained what was going on, and had still sufficient credit with the King to baffle the machinations of his enemies and procure the disgrace of the confessor. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that his own was within measurable distance, when Death intervened.

After his failure before Montauban, he laid siege to Monheuv, a little town on the Garonne, which had just broken out into revolt. The place was taken, pillaged, and burned; but while the flames were still devouring the captured town, the Constable was attacked by a pestilential fever which was decimating the royal army. The privations of the campaign, its disasters, and the unceasing anxiety as to the future to which he had been for some time a prey, had told upon his strength, and on December 15, 1621, he died, in his forty-fourth year.

The King showed little sorrow at the loss of his friend, whose death was hailed with joy by the public, as would have been, without doubt, that of any other favourite. As for Madame de Luynes, although for the moment inconsolable, she soon dried her tears, and less than twelve months after her husband's death married that same Duc de Chevreuse against whom Louis XIII. had warned the late Constable.



CHARLES ALBERT, DUC DE LUYNES  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY MONCORNET





Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Chevreuse, was the second of the four sons of the celebrated Henry I., Duc de Guise, assassinated at the States of Blois, and was born in 1578, a few weeks later than his predecessor in his wife's affections. He bore at first the title of Prince de Joinville, under which name he distinguished himself at the sieges of La Fère (1596) and Amiens (1598), and was mixed up in the foolish intrigues of his mistress Henriette d'Enragues, who subsequently became that of Henri IV. Created Duc de Chevreuse by Louis XIII. in 1619, he rehabilitated himself under this new incarnation by the bravery and military skill which he displayed in the war of 1621-2 against the Protestants, and now stood high in favour at Court.

Like nearly all the Lorraine princes, the Duc de Chevreuse was a handsome and very distinguished-looking man—" *l'homme de la meilleur mine qu'on pouvait voir*," says Tallemant des Réaux ; but he had little ability, was recklessly extravagant, and of very dissolute morals, which explains and, in some measure, extenuates the irregularities of his wife.

It is doubtful if affection counted for much in this marriage—at least, upon the lady's side—and it was certainly hastened, if not actually brought about, by a deplorable accident, which frustrated the hopes of King and people and occasioned the temporary disgrace of Marie de Rohan.

Early in 1622, to the great joy of the nation, the Queen had been declared pregnant. Prayers were offered up throughout the realm for her safe delivery, and all those about her Majesty's person were strictly enjoined not to allow her to exert herself ; to which instructions, however, they unfortunately appear to have paid but little heed. One evening, Anne and a party of courtiers, which included her widowed *Surintendant* and

Mlle. de Verneuil, went to pay a visit to the Princesse de Condé, who was unwell and confined to her bed. On their way back to the Queen's apartments, they were passing through the *grande salle* of the Louvre, when Madame de Luynes and Mlle. de Verneuil seized their royal mistress by the arms and began to run. They had not gone many paces, however, when the Queen tripped and fell on her face. A few hours later, to the general dismay, it was known that her Majesty had had a miscarriage.

Louis XIII. was furiously indignant, as well he might be, and wrote to the two delinquents with his own hand, ordering them to retire from Court. It is probable that the disgrace of *Madame la Connétable* might have lasted some considerable time, had not her marriage with the Duc de Chevreuse, who, as we have mentioned, stood high in the royal favour, paved the way for her return.

## CHAPTER II

Increased intimacy between Anne of Austria and Madame de Chevreuse on the return of the latter to Court—Marie de' Medici intrigues to disturb the harmony of the royal *ménage*—The Queen turns for consolation to the society of Madame de Chevreuse, who speedily acquires a great and pernicious influence over her—The inclination of the Queen towards "*l'honnête galanterie*" provokes the jealousy of Louis XIII.—Richelieu and Anne of Austria—The Cardinal's advances towards the Queen misunderstood by contemporary writers—Responsibility of Madame de Chevreuse for their contemptuous rejection—Henry Rich, afterwards Earl of Holland—His sentimental and political relations with Madame de Chevreuse—They resolve to promote a love-affair between Anne and the Duke of Buckingham—Marriage of Charles I. and Henriette Marie—Arrival of Buckingham in France—His magnificence—Question of his relations with Madame de Chevreuse considered—He determines to attempt the conquest of the Queen, who, persuaded by the specious arguments of Madame de Chevreuse, encourages his presumption—The Duc and Duchesse de Chevreuse chosen to accompany Henriette Marie to England—Indiscretion of Anne of Austria in regard to Buckingham—The garden episode at Amiens—Departure of Buckingham: his farewell to the Queen—His return to Amiens—Singular scene in the Queen's bed-chamber—Indignation of Louis XIII.—Disgrace of several of the Queen's attendants.

**A**NNE of Austria was far from showing any resentment towards her *Surintendante* on account of the accident for which her thoughtlessness had been responsible, and, as soon as the latter returned to Court, she and the Queen became on more intimate terms than ever. Nor is this surprising, for Madame de Chevreuse was warmly attached to her mistress, and Anne at this time stood sorely in need of companionship and sympathy.

Luynes had not been dead many months when Marie

every one, was lacking in circumspection. The efforts of the Queen-Mother to disturb the harmony of the royal *ménage* were attended with but too much success ; the King tartly reprimanded his consort for her indiscretions ; the Queen retorted angrily, and husband and wife drifted farther and farther apart.

In these circumstances, it was only natural that Anne should have sought consolation in the society of her own *entourage*, and that Madame de Chevreuse, who felt a real sympathy for her royal mistress, and was, besides, admirably fitted to amuse and distract her, should soon have acquired a great influence over her. "All her [the Queen's] consolation," writes Madame de Motteville, "was the interest which the Duchesse de Luynes, now remarried with the Duc de Chevreuse, took in her sorrows, which she endeavoured to soften by the amusements which she proposed, and by communicating to her, as much as she could, her own lively and joyous humour, which turned the most serious things of the greatest consequence into matters for jest and laughter—*a giovine cuor tutto è guico*."

There can be no doubt that Madame de Chevreuse was warmly attached to the Queen—she was ere long to furnish abundant proof of it—but it is equally certain that her influence over Anne was from the first a baneful one. She began by urging her to make a vigorous stand against the pretensions of the Queen-Mother and to decline to be present at the Luxembourg when the Court paid its homage to that princess—a refusal which greatly displeased the King. She encouraged her to meet the remonstrances which his Majesty addressed to her with biting retorts, which perceptibly widened the breach between the royal pair ; while in another direction her counsels were still more pernicious.

To her first husband, Marie de Rohan, had been a

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de' Medici succeeded in recovering much of her former influence over the King, and resumed her place at the head of the Council, where, profiting by the sage advice of her Chancellor, Richelieu, for whom, in September 1622, she obtained a Cardinal's hat and, two years later, the post of First Minister, she astonished those who remembered her regency by the prudence, address, and firmness she displayed in very difficult circumstances. The good understanding which now existed between mother and son destroyed that between husband and wife. "For the Queen-Mother," writes Madame de Motteville, "being convinced that, in order to exercise control over the young prince, the young princess must not be on good terms with him, intrigued with such perseverance and success in creating misunderstandings between them that, from that day forth, the Queen, her daughter-in-law, had neither influence nor comfort."

Marie de' Medici allowed no opportunity to pass of depreciating the abilities and *savoir vivre* of the young Queen, and, to the latter's intense mortification, persuaded the King to transfer the State receptions of the Louvre to her own salons at the Luxembourg, in order to obviate the inconveniences which, she declared, would be bound to arise from the youth and inexperience of his consort. She complained to her son that, when writing to her, Anne failed in respect towards her, terminating her letters with the words : "*Votre affectionnée fille*," instead of following the formula adopted by the King and styling herself : "*Votre très humble et obéissante fille*." She accused her of encouraging *Monsieur*<sup>1</sup> to neglect Mlle. de Montpensier, the richest heiress in France, whom she was particularly anxious that he should marry. And she hinted, not obscurely, that the Queen's manner towards certain noblemen of the Court, whose admiration of her was patent to

<sup>1</sup> Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, only brother of Louis XIII.

wanting. The glamour of royalty has been known to invest even the plainest of women with attractions, and Anne of Austria was a very handsome young woman indeed ; tall and well-formed, with fine eyes of a blue-green colour, bright red lips, a dazzlingly fair complexion, beautiful arms and hands, and a very pleasing expression. Two dukes, those of Bellegarde and Montmorency, were particularly assiduous in their attentions to the Queen. The latter, who is described by his contemporaries as "the noblest, wealthiest, handsomest, and most pious gentleman of the kingdom," had hitherto worshipped at the shrine of Madame de Sablé, who, on her side, believed that she had found in him the ideal of her dreams. But, at the first inkling that he gave of his changed sentiments, she promptly broke with him and refused to see him any more, "being unable to receive with pleasure the homage which she had to share with the greatest princess in the world."<sup>1</sup>

The greatest princess in the world appears to have permitted both Bellegarde and Montmorency a considerable amount of freedom in the expression of the admiration with which she had inspired them, insomuch that the King took offence and reprimanded her somewhat sharply, to be met with the reply that "the homage paid her by the Ducs de Montmorency and de Bellegarde was only a just tribute to the attractions of their Queen." Such an answer naturally did not tend to appease his Majesty's jealousy, and he showed himself so curt towards Montmorency that the latter's friends counselled him to absent himself for a while from Court. However, he was spared the necessity of following this advice, since Louis XIII. at length allowed himself to be persuaded that the duke's admiration of his consort was merely of the Platonic variety.

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville.



with generosity and all kinds of virtues ; but that, on the other hand, women, who were the ornaments of the world and made to be served and adored, ought not to permit anything save respectful homage." If Madame de Sablé herself possessed sufficient discretion to conduct her relations with the opposite sex in strict accordance with the principles she professed, about which certain chroniclers are frankly sceptical, the same could not be said of some of her disciples. For human nature is weak, and romance and prudence go ill together ; and the ladies who discoursed so eloquently about the love of the soul did not always find it so satisfying as they had been led to believe.

"The Queen," writes Madame de Motteville, "confessed to me later (being then wholly undeceived about such dangerous illusions) that, in her youth, she did not comprehend that what is called *l'honnête galanterie* could be blameworthy, any more than that practised by the Spanish ladies of the Court of Madrid, who, living like nuns in the palace, and never speaking to men save in the presence of the King or Queen of Spain, nevertheless boast of their conquests, and discourse of them as facts which enhance rather than injure their reputations. She had in the Duchesse de Chevreuse a friend who was wholly given up to these vain amusements ; and the Queen, owing to her counsels, had not avoided, in spite of the purity of her soul, taking pleasure in the charms of that passion, which she accepted with a certain complacency, since it flattered her vanity more than it shocked her virtue."

Madame de Chevreuse, in fact, found her royal mistress far from an unpromising pupil, and, in that lady's experienced hands, the Queen's education in gallantry progressed rapidly, for, needless to say, opportunities for putting into practice the lessons she received were not

faithful wife enough ; but then he had had the good fortune to command both her affection and esteem. His successor commanded neither, and, she was, in consequence, only too ready to accept the homage which was so freely offered her. When her friends condoled with her on possessing a husband who led an idle, useless existence and squandered her fortune on dissolute companions of both sexes, she replied, with a shrug of her shapely shoulders : “ *Je m'en endommage !* ” and, although for a year or two after her second marriage there was nothing absolutely criminal in her conduct, it certainly did not tend to edification.

Madame de Chevreuse desired that the Queen should likewise find compensation, and, if she did not succeed in awakening her Majesty to a proper appreciation of her opportunities in this direction, she succeeded quite far enough, and led her into relations which seriously compromised her reputation. It was an age when Platonic gallantry was the mode, and Anne, unhappily for her future peace, had adopted the specious maxims propounded by the celebrated Madame de Sablé,<sup>1</sup> all the more readily since they had been transplanted from her own native land. Madame de Sablé was a passionate admirer of the Spanish romantic school, and had, Madame de Motteville tells us, “ formed a lofty idea of the gallantry which the Spaniards had learned from the Moors.” “ She was persuaded,” the chronicler continues, “ that men could, without evil, entertain tender feelings towards women ; that the desire to please them moved them to great and noble deeds, gave them understanding, and inspired them

<sup>1</sup> Madeleine de Souvré, daughter of Gilles de Souvré, Marquis de Courtenvaux, *gouverneur* to Louis XIII. and afterwards *Maréchal de France* ; born in 1599 ; married, in 1614, Philippe Emmanuel de Sablé, Seigneur de Bois-Dauphin, Marquis de Sablé ; died at the Abbey of Port-Royal, 1678. Victor Cousin has devoted to her one of his most characteristic studies of the seventeenth century.

in Paris, to sound the French Court on the question of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, soon to become Charles I., and the charming Henriette Marie, youngest sister of Louis XIII. The second son of Robert, Earl of Warwick, and Penelope Rich, beloved of Sir Philip Sidney, who celebrated her charms in those sonnets which were afterwards collected under the title of "Astrophel and Stella," Rich, aided by a singularly handsome, though rather effeminate, face<sup>1</sup> and the most winning manners, had risen rapidly to favour at Court, and might have rivalled even his friend and patron, the Duke of Buckingham, in the affections of James I. could he have brought himself to endure the unpleasing caresses which that monarch was desirous of lavishing upon him.<sup>2</sup>

Rich proved an admirable ambassador of Love. He lost no opportunity of chanting the praises of the Prince of Wales to Henriette Marie, while to England he despatched the most glowing reports of the charms and virtues of the little French princess. "My lord," he writes to Buckingham, "she is a lovely, sweet young creature. Her growth is not great yet, but her shape is." And to Charles he describes her as "the sweetest creature in France," and "for beauty and goodness an angel." Nor did he neglect to ingratiate himself with the Court and, in particular, with the feminine portion thereof, upon which his handsome presence and charm of manner made the most favourable impression. In accordance with his instructions, he addressed his homage in the first place to the Queen-Mother; but he soon perceived the necessity of conciliating Anne of Austria, who was inclined to show

<sup>1</sup> "His features and pleasant aspect equalled the most beautiful woman," writes Wilson, in his "History of the Reign of James I."; while La Porte describes him as "*un des plus hommes du monde, mais d'une beauté efféminée.*"

<sup>2</sup> Osborne reports that, on one occasion, Rich was so indiscreet as to "turn aside and spit after the King had slabbered his mouth."



HENRY RICH. AFTERWARDS EARL OF HOLLAND  
 FROM AN ENGRAVING BY WILHELM FASS



herself decidedly hostile to the English alliance, on account of her sister, the Infanta Margaret, whom she held to have been betrayed and deserted by the Prince of Wales. To gain the young Queen, he naturally addressed himself to her friend and confidante, Madame de Chevreuse, and paid her the most assiduous court. He soon succeeded in establishing himself in her good graces and in winning her over to the interests of England, nor were their relations confined to Platonic gallantry. Whether Rich, who was a man of many loves, was really as much enamoured of the duchess as he succeeded in leading her to believe, or whether his love-making was dictated rather by diplomatic than by sentimental considerations, is uncertain ; but there can be little doubt that the duchess quite lost her heart to him, and that this liaison was her *début* in both love and politics.

The support of the confidante once secured, it was an easy task to remove the prejudices of the Queen ; and soon Anne announced herself “ so truly French as to prefer the alliance of the Prince of Wales with Madame Henriette, rather than that with her own sister the Infanta, for whom she declared that she had ‘ other views.’ ” But Rich, who, in September 1624, was raised to the rank of Earl of Holland, as a reward for his diplomatic services, was not content with reconciling Anne to the idea of the English alliance ; he desired to win her over entirely to the interests of his country, and readily persuaded Madame de Chevreuse to lend herself to his views.

After some discussion, they decided that the surest means of bringing about what they desired was to engage the Queen in some *grande passion* similar to their own—one which should possess her heart and mind to the exclusion of all else, and render her indifferent to every consideration save that of pleasing her lover. And who so proper to inspire such a passion as he who in a few short

years had climbed to the very pinnacle of Fortune and made himself the most powerful subject in all Europe, with revenues that many a prince might envy—he who was deemed “the handsomest-bodied man of England,” and the very pearl of chivalry—the superb, the magnificent, the inimitable George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham?

And so, while Holland in his despatches to Buckingham dwelt upon the perfections of this young queen, so worthy in every way of love and devotion, yet so cruelly neglected and isolated, Madame de Chevreuse, with the aid of materials furnished by her lover and her own very lively imagination, occupied herself in painting, for the delectation of her royal mistress, an equally alluring portrait of the fascinating duke, and, as she herself confessed in after years, “forced the Queen to think of Buckingham, by perpetually talking of him.” Thus skilfully did they fire the imagination of both the sentimental queen and the presumptuous favourite, and prepare the way for the romance which was to begin in earnest when Buckingham, in accordance with the intention he had announced, should arrive at the French Court to escort Henriette Marie to her husband.

For, the difficulties in the way of the English alliance having been at length adjusted, the Treaty of Marriage had been signed in November 1624, and, though the death of James I., in the following March, necessitated it being renewed by Charles in his own person, the nuptials were not long delayed. On May 8, 1625, the betrothal ceremony took place at the Louvre, the Duc de Chevreuse, a distant kinsman of Charles I.,<sup>1</sup> acting as proxy for the English monarch; and on the following Sunday, May

<sup>1</sup> Charles I. was descended, on the distaff side, from Marie de Lorraine, daughter of Claude, Duc de Guise, great-grandfather of the Duc de Chevreuse. In virtue of the royal bridegroom's connection with the Lorraine family, it was stipulated that at the marriage-ceremony the princes and princesses of that House should be seated with the royal family.

11—the old English May Day—the marriage was celebrated, in conformity with ancient usage, on a platform erected before the western porch of Notre-Dame. After the ceremony, the bride entered the cathedral to hear Mass, but the Duc de Chevreuse, being proxy for a Protestant king, did not accompany her, and remained, with the English Ambassadors, Holland and Carlisle, in the cloisters, to await the conclusion of the service.

It had been the intention of Buckingham to be present at the marriage, but various reasons had contributed to delay his departure from England, and it was not until three days after the ceremony that he arrived in Paris. He came ostensibly to escort Henriette Marie to England, and as the bearer of presents from Charles to his bride, but the true object of his mission was to persuade Louis XIII. and Richelieu to conclude an offensive alliance against Spain. The advent of this magnificent personage had been awaited with great curiosity by the Parisians, nor had they any cause to be disappointed. For, though the illness and death of James I. and the postponement of the marriage had caused him to countermand the sumptuous wardrobe he had originally ordered for his journey, and his anxiety to reach Paris necessitated the greater part of his retinue remaining behind, he, nevertheless, “appeared with all the lustre the wealth of England could adorn him with, and outshined all the bravery that that Court dress in, and overacted the whole nation in their most peculiar vanities.”<sup>1</sup>

Buckingham was lodged at the Hôtel de Chevreuse, in the Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, where he was splendidly entertained by the duke and duchess. Retz and certain historians who have followed him assert that Buckingham took advantage of the opportunities thus afforded him to make violent love to his hostess, who

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon.



was only too ready to meet him half-way, and that tender relations were speedily established between them. But, whatever Retz may say, it would seem in the highest degree improbable that Buckingham was anything to Madame de Chevreuse but the intimate friend of her lover, the leader of the party into which Holland had drawn her. When Madame de Chevreuse loved—Retz himself admits it—she loved faithfully and uniquely, and, as Victor Cousin very justly observes, it is not at the age of four-and-twenty that a woman makes game of a first attachment to the point of giving her own lover to another; and the rôle played by the duchess in the affair of Buckingham and Anne of Austria, of which we are about to speak, is sufficiently odious without seeking to make it still more ugly. “Madame de Chevreuse, it is true,” continues her historian, “was taken ill on learning of the assassination of Buckingham. Nothing more natural: she was losing in him a true friend, the confidant of her first amours, the chief and hope of the enemies of Richelieu. To the unreliable statements of Retz, we must oppose the clear and well-founded narrative of La Rochefoucauld, and, above all, the silence of Tallemant des Réaux, who would not have failed to add this incident to his *chronique scandaleuse*, if he had ever heard any one speak of it. Thus, without pretending to see clearly in such matters, particularly after the lapse of two centuries, we are inclined to think that the Duke of Buckingham ought to be erased from the list, still very numerous, of the lovers of Madame de Chevreuse.”

Although Holland and Carlisle, with the assistance of their ally, Madame de Chevreuse, had contrived that Buckingham should be very cordially received at the French Court, the impression which he created there was not an altogether favourable one. If his handsome face and “sweet and accostable address” won the hearts of the

ladies, if the poorer gentlemen were not ungrateful for the diamonds which dropped from his glittering person as he moved through the mazes of the dance, and which, when tendered to him, he smilingly refused to take back, the greater nobles did not relish being "outshined" in all their bravery, and relished still less the pretensions of "*cet étranger présomptueux*," as Brienne calls him.

For the seed sown by Holland and Madame de Chevreuse had not failed to bear fruit. When Buckingham arrived in France, he was already deeply interested in the beautiful, neglected princess whom Holland had depicted in his despatches; when he saw her, his interest speedily changed to admiration, and from that to "dangerous and blameworthy desires."<sup>1</sup> Ordinary conquests might content ordinary men, but he, the favourite of kings, would rest satisfied with nothing less than the love of a queen. And so, spurred on by vanity, love of adventure, and perhaps, too, by the hope of revenge—since, to his intense mortification, Louis XIII. and Richelieu had refused to allow themselves to be drawn into the alliance which he so ardently desired—rather than by genuine passion, this man, who had come to escort the Queen of England to her husband, proceeded to lay siege to the heart of the Queen of France.

It must be admitted that he did not lack encouragement, or, at least, what might well be interpreted as encouragement by an ill-balanced mind. For the vanity of Anne, prepared as she was to regard Buckingham with no ordinary degree of favour, was flattered by the admiration of so splendid a gallant; and Madame de Chevreuse, ever at her elbow, had persuaded her that to smile upon the duke's passion would tend to the glory of France, inasmuch as the Queen, reigning over the heart of Buckingham, would govern the counsels of Charles I.

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville.

Even Anne's ardent apologist, Madame de Motteville, while denying that her royal mistress ever entertained the smallest inclination to deviate from the path of virtue, is fain to admit that she acted very indiscreetly. "The Duke of Buckingham," she writes, "was the only one who had the audacity to attack the Queen's heart. He was tall, well-made, handsome, noble, magnificent, liberal, and the favourite of his king, so that he had his master's treasure to spend and the loan of all the Crown jewels of England to adorn his person. It is not astonishing, therefore, that, with so many amiable advantages, he had high ambitions and indulged in noble but dangerous and blameworthy desires, or that he had the happiness to make the beautiful Queen admit that, if a virtuous woman could love another than her husband, he would have been the only one who could have pleased her. He was the person in the world of whom I heard her say the most good. It is, no doubt, to be presumed that his vows were received with a certain degree of complacency."

The Duc and Duchesse de Chevreuse had been chosen by Louis XIII. to conduct the Queen of England to Dover—a selection generally believed to be due to the fact that the duchess was the possessor of the diamonds of the unfortunate Maréchale d'Ancre, which were but little inferior to the Crown jewels, and that she and her husband would therefore be enabled to appear in England with a splendour worthy of the Sovereign whose representatives they were.<sup>1</sup> Louis XIII. had originally intended to accompany his sister as far as Calais, but soon after the marriage he became unwell and was obliged to renounce

<sup>1</sup> *À propos* of these diamonds, Holland, in his despatches, mentions that one evening he happened to visit the Hôtel de Chevreuse, where he found the duke and duchess on the point of starting for a masque at the Louvre. "Never before did I behold such jewels," he writes, "and never again expect to see such profusion adorning the persons of subjects!"

his proposed journey. Brienne tells us, in his *Mémoires*, that he took upon himself to represent to Anne of Austria that, in the circumstances, she would do well to remain with her husband, instead of accompanying the Queen of England, but that her Majesty refused to be guided by his advice.

On June 2, the King bade farewell to his sister at Compiègne and set out for Fontainebleau, while the latter, with Anne of Austria and the Queen-Mother, the Duc d'Orléans, the Princesse de Condé, the Duc and Duchesse de Chevreuse, Buckingham, and the English Ambassadors, and a magnificent cavalcade composed of over 4,000 persons,<sup>1</sup> took the road to the coast. At Amiens, the progress of the bridal-train was arrested by the sudden illness of Marie de' Medici ; but her indisposition was not deemed of a serious character, and it was hoped that in a few days she would be able to resume her journey to Calais. Meantime, her companions proceeded to extract as much amusement as they could from their enforced sojourn in a provincial town. The Queen-Mother was lodged at the episcopal palace ; but Anne of Austria and her suite found accommodation in a house with a large garden attached on the banks of the Somme, where, with an imprudence which shocked the graver members of her suite, she appears to have given Buckingham, whose infatuation was, by this time, patent to every one, frequent opportunities of access to her presence.

Several days passed thus, and then, as the Queen-Mother informed him in a rather pointed manner that there was no immediate hope of her being able to travel, and Charles I. was becoming impatient for the arrival of his bride, Buckingham found himself under the necessity of resuming his journey. The day before his departure,

<sup>1</sup> The suite of the Duc and Duchesse de Chevreuse alone numbered between three and four hundred.

*Monsieur* gave a sumptuous banquet, at the conclusion of which Buckingham and the English Ambassadors escorted Anne of Austria to her lodging. Just as dusk was falling, the Queen, accompanied by her *dame d'atours*, Madame du Vernet, her equerry Putange, Madame de Chevreuse, Buckingham, and Holland strolled into the garden. The duke escorted her Majesty ; Holland, Madame de Chevreuse ; and Putange, the lady-in-waiting. Presently, Anne and Buckingham entered an alley screened from the rest of the garden by a trellis, while Madame de Chevreuse and her cavalier turned into another secluded walk. As Anne's equerry, it was the duty of Putange always to keep his royal mistress in sight, so as to be able to render her any slight service that she might require ; but, in the belief, as he subsequently asserted, that Buckingham, on the eve of his departure, might have some message of importance to communicate to her Majesty, or, more probably, because, like a gallant Frenchman, he was not unnaturally reluctant to intrude upon what was evidently a very tender *tête-à-tête*, he followed, with his companion, at a very discreet distance. Suddenly, Anne's voice was heard calling for her equerry, who hastened to her side, followed by Madame du Vernet. She reprimanded him for having left her, and appeared very much agitated. Exactly how far Buckingham had carried his presumptuous love-making is uncertain. According to Madame de Motteville, he had merely been guilty of "some too passionate expressions" ; but La Porte, one of Anne's *valets-de-chambre*, who enjoyed her entire confidence, declares that the duke, "favoured by the gathering obscurity, took the insolent liberty of attempting to kiss the Queen" ; and, from what we know of Buckingham's audacity, this seems highly probable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tallemant des Réaux says that Buckingham went even further than this, but we need pay no attention to this incorrigible scandal-monger.

The following day, Buckingham took his departure with the Queen of England, Anne of Austria and Marie de' Medici accompanying them for a short distance upon their way. The duke was, or feigned to be, in despair. "The Queen did me the honour to confide to me," writes Madame de Motteville, "that, when the Duke of Buckingham came to kiss her gown, she being on the front seat of the coach with the Princesse de Conti beside her, he screened himself with the curtain, as though to say a few words in private, but much more to wipe away the tears that were falling from his eyes. The Princesse de Conti, who mocked at goodness, and was, I have heard, very witty, said that she could answer to the King for the virtue of the Queen, but that she could not say as much for the hardness of her heart, because the tears of this lover must have touched her heart, and she suspected that her eyes at least regarded him with some pity."

But Anne had not seen the last of her admirer. Contrary winds detained the ships which had been sent to convey Henriette to England for some days in Boulogne roads, during which the Queen kept up an active correspondence with Madame de Chevreuse, through the medium of La Porte. "I came and I returned," writes the latter; "I carried letters to Madame de Chevreuse, and returned with her replies, which appeared to be of the utmost consequence, because the Queen gave orders to the Duc de Chaulnes to take care that the gates of Amiens were never closed, so that I might not be delayed at any hour, even at night." There seems to be very little doubt that, under cover to her confidante, Anne was in correspondence with Buckingham, or, at least, that there was an exchange of messages which persuaded the duke that she would not be altogether displeased if he came to bid one more tender adieu "to the fairest vision which had ever gladdened his sight." Any way, he seized the excuse of the

arrival of a courier from England, the bearer of instructions from Charles I., relative to the reception in London of Henriette's suite, to hasten back to Amiens.

Having been admitted to the presence of Marie de' Medici, who, after bidding farewell to her daughter, had again betaken herself to bed, and transacted the business which had served as a pretext for his return, he demanded an audience of Anne of Austria. Her Majesty, who had recently been bled, was also confined to her bed, and was at first disinclined to grant the duke's petition. She had, it appears, just received a letter from Madame de Chevreuse, warning her of Buckingham's intended return and advising her not to receive him. As her very indulgent historian, Victor Cousin, is obliged to admit, it was certainly not the fault of Madame de Chevreuse that Anne had not succumbed altogether before the fascinations of Buckingham ; but, on the other hand, it was no part of her policy to allow him to compromise the Queen openly, and she recognised that the garden episode at Amiens, were it to reach the ears of Louis XIII., would be quite sufficient to entail some very unpleasant consequences.

On second thoughts, however, Anne relented, and directed her *dame d'honneur*, the Comtesse de Lannoy, to ask the advice of the Queen-Mother as to whether she should accede to the duke's petition. The countess, who is described as "wise, virtuous, and elderly," expressed strong disapproval of the proposed visit, but Marie de' Medici disagreed with her, and inquired why, as she herself had received M. de Buckingham, her daughter-in-law should not do likewise. Madame de Lannoy, who could not, of course, venture to point out the difference in age and attractiveness between the two princesses, was obliged to acknowledge herself defeated, and returned to communicate the Queen-Mother's pronouncement to her mistress. But she made the best of the situation, by investing the



GEORGE VILLIERS, FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY W. BAILLIE, AFTER THE PAINTING BY VANDYCK





interview with all the formality of a state ceremonial, and giving orders that none of her Majesty's waiting-women or officers of the Chamber should quit the room so long as Buckingham remained there.

These precautionary measures taken, the duke, who had been cooling his heels in the ante-chamber, was at length admitted to the royal presence. Ignoring the frowns of Madame de Lannoy, who stood grim as the dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece beside her Majesty's pillow, the enamoured nobleman rushed forward, threw himself on his knees by the Queen's bed, and "kissed her coverlet with transports so excessive that it was easy to see that his passion was violent, and of a kind that deprives such as are attacked by it of the use of their reason."<sup>1</sup>

Anne was so taken aback by such extraordinary behaviour that she knew not what to say, and could only glance appealingly at Madame de Lannoy, who sternly bade the duke rise and take the folding-seat to which his rank entitled him, since his attitude was one to which the Court of France was unaccustomed. But her efforts to awaken him to a sense of the enormity of his conduct were futile, since he, not one whit abashed, protested that, not being a Frenchman, he was not bound by French laws. Then, turning again to the Queen, "he said quite loudly the most tender things in the world."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the Queen, recovering from her first embarrassment, began to reprimand the duke for his temerity, and, "without perhaps being very angry,"<sup>3</sup> ordered him to rise and leave the room. Very reluctantly he obeyed; but he remained the night at Amiens, and on the following morning Anne showed that his ardour had not really displeased her by admitting him to

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

a final leave-taking, in the presence of the whole Court. Buckingham then took his departure, and, a few days later, Marie de' Medici being sufficiently recovered to take the road again, the two Queens set out for Fontainebleau, where Louis XIII. awaited them.

As may be supposed, the story of the "goings on" of his consort with "M. de Buckingham" at Amiens had already reached the King's ears, and had lost nothing in the transit. "The King," writes La Porte, "testified the strongest jealousy at all these proceedings, and believed the malignant interpretation put upon them by her Majesty's enemies. The Queen-Mother, however, endeavoured to disabuse her son's mind, and told him that it was nothing, since, if the Queen had desired to do evil, it would have been impossible, she having had so many persons about her. This reasoning, though incontestable, failed to extinguish the King's jealousy, as he proceeded to demonstrate."

These demonstrations took the form of dismissing forthwith the writer of the above, the equerry, Putange, Madame du Vernet, the Queen's Spanish physician, Ribera, and the Chevalier de Jars, whom Anne had just sent to England with letters to Madame de Chevreuse, from her Majesty's service, and in writing an exceedingly sharp letter to his imprudent consort, in which the ominous word "divorce" is said to have occurred.

Although we may believe with Madame de Motteville that Anne had been no more guilty in intention than she had been in fact, and saw nothing more than a romantic and innocent attachment in her relations with Buckingham, her conduct after the departure of the duke was certainly capable of a very different construction. Not only did she decline to offer any explanation to her husband, beyond informing him that she had been "unable to prevent the Duke of Buckingham from

esteeming, or even from loving her"—an observation which was scarcely calculated to mend matters—but she continued to manifest the greatest interest in the doings of that personage, and, if we are to believe Roger Coke, sent him one of her own diamond garters, through the medium of one Balthazar Gerbier, an artist.<sup>1</sup> As for Buckingham, no considerations of prudence or of delicacy were likely to have much weight with him, and we hear of him wearing the Queen's portrait, toasting her at banquets, and conducting himself generally like an accepted lover. Little wonder, then, that Anne should have remained an object of suspicion to her gloomy lord, or that, when "M. de Buckingham" proposed to return to France on a diplomatic mission, he should have been informed in very explicit terms that his presence on French soil could not be permitted. It is probable that this refusal had not a little to do with the rancour which the favourite subsequently conceived against France, and with that unfortunate policy which was the outcome of it. But that is a subject which lies outside the scope of the present volume; and we must return to Madame de Chevreuse, who was perhaps beginning to feel some compunction for the embarrassments into which she had led her royal mistress.

<sup>1</sup> "The Detection of the Court and State of England." The incident of the diamond studs told by Dumas in his immortal romance is probably based on an anecdote related by La Rochefoucauld. The Countess of Carlisle, he tells us, between whom and Buckingham there had been some very tender passages previous to the latter's visit to France, observed, on the duke's return to England, that he was wearing, somewhat ostentatiously, some diamond studs which were unfamiliar to her. Never doubting that they were a present from her royal rival, she contrived, while talking with him at a ball, to cut them off, with the idea of sending them to Richelieu and ruining the Queen. Buckingham, however, speedily discovered his loss, and guessing who was the thief and what were her amiable intentions, he caused all the English ports to be closed, and did not allow them to be reopened until he had studs exactly similar to those which had been stolen made and sent to Anne.

## CHAPTER III

Madame de Chevreuse in England—She gives birth to a daughter at Richmond—Learning that Louis XIII. is much incensed against her, she does not return to France until the spring of 1626—Humiliating position of Anne of Austria—Her hatred of Richelieu industriously fanned by Madame de Chevreuse—Increasing opposition to the Cardinal—Character of Gaston, Duc d'Anjou (*Monsieur*), brother of Louis XIII.—The Montpensier marriage-project—Madame de Chevreuse begins to pull the strings—The "*Conspiration des Dames*"—Henri de Talleyrand, Comte de Chalais—His violent passion for Madame de Chevreuse, who engages him in the conspiracy, which speedily becomes a very formidable one—Arrest of the Maréchal d'Ornano at Fontainebleau—Consternation of the conspirators—Plot against the life or liberty of the Cardinal—Indiscretion of Chalais, who is compelled to denounce it to Richelieu—*Monsieur* takes an oath of fidelity to the King, and, nevertheless, continues his intrigues—Madame de Chevreuse engages Chalais anew in the conspiracy—The Court sets out for Brittany—Arrest of the Duc de Vendôme and his brother, the Grand Prior, at Blois—Pitiable indecision of *Monsieur*—He is summoned to join the King.

THE young Queen of England sailed from Boulogne on June 22, and, the sea being smooth and the wind favourable, Dover was reached in about seven hours. Charles I. was not there to welcome his bride, having, in deference apparently to the wishes of Marie de' Medici, postponed their meeting until Henriette should have had time to recover from the effects of her first sea-voyage. He, however, arrived the next morning, "badly dressed and worse accompanied," writes one of the Queen's attendants, and "folded her in his arms with many kisses." Henriette informed him that she had come "to be made use of and commanded by him"; but when the royal party was about to set off for

Canterbury, where the English marriage was to take place, and the King desired that Madame de Saint-George, her French Lady of the Bedchamber, should surrender her place in the Queen's carriage to one of her English ladies, nothing would induce her to consent to this arrangement.

The marriage was celebrated the same evening in the great hall of St. Augustine at Canterbury, after which the King and Queen proceeded to the archbishop's palace, where Madame de Chevreuse assisted at the bridal *coucher* and handed her Majesty her night attire. London was reached two days later, the royal entry being made by water, as the plague was then raging in the city.

Madame de Chevreuse, notwithstanding the epidemic and the near approach of an interesting domestic event, which rendered it imprudent for her to undergo much fatigue, seems to have enjoyed her stay in England. The recommendation of Buckingham assured her a cordial welcome from Charles I., and, though probably his Majesty had his own opinion concerning the services which the duchess had rendered his favourite, he was careful not to allow her to suspect it. Among the gentlemen of the Court her beauty and vivacity naturally aroused great admiration; but if it be true, as a contemporary chronicler assures us, that she informed the English ladies that "all their charms were as nothing in comparison with hers," she can hardly have been regarded with any very kindly feeling by her own sex. Her husband, upon whom Charles I. conferred the Garter, also appears to have made a very favourable impression, and we hear of him at a Whitehall banquet eclipsing all the English present by his "unspeakable bravery."<sup>1</sup>

The birth of a daughter—a young lady concerning

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires d'un Favori du duc d'Orléans, Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France, Série 2, tom. iii.*

whom we shall have a good deal to say hereafter—delayed the duchess's departure from England until late in the autumn, and when she at length left our shores it was not to return to France. Advices received from the French Court were to the effect that the *rôle* she had played in the Buckingham affair had greatly incensed the King, and that, under a specious pretext, he had relieved her of her post of *Surintendante* of the Queen's Household. She therefore decided that it would be inadvisable to reappear at the Louvre until her Sovereign's wrath had had time to subside, and accordingly proceeded to Brussels, on a visit to the Archduchess, the Infanta Isabella, where she remained until the spring of the following year.

Meantime, in France, the situation of Anne of Austria had become a most humiliating one. At every turn she was made to feel the depths of the disgrace into which she had fallen. Except on State occasions, the King studiously avoided her ; she could not confer the smallest favour ; she was not permitted to quit the precincts of the palace without his Majesty's express permission ; and even the most ordinary amusements of her rank and station were denied her. It seemed as though Louis XIII. and Richelieu were resolved to reduce her to social as well as political nullity.

It is true that Richelieu, in the hope that adversity might have rendered the Queen amenable to reason, had, on more than one occasion, offered to intercede for her restoration to the good graces of her husband. But Anne's proud spirit revolted at the idea of surrender, and not only had she scornfully repulsed every overture, but declared that between her and the Cardinal no accommodation was possible, and that it must be war *à outrance*.

The letters of Madame de Chevreuse, smarting as the writer was at the loss of her post of *Surintendante*—

a disgrace which she not unnaturally attributed to the influence of Richelieu—served only to confirm her in these bellicose resolutions, and she was eager to lend herself to any enterprise, however hazardous and however culpable, which had for its object the ruin of the detested Cardinal.

There were but too many of the same way of thinking, for, as the favour of Richelieu increased, so did the aristocratic opposition to him gather strength. The *grande*s of the kingdom were indignant that a Minister should presume to govern in the general interest, instead of in their own, and made ready to draw the sword against him, as they had against Luynes and against the *Maréchal d'Ancre*. Conspiracy and revolt seemed to be in the air, and men and women caballed incessantly, persuaded that the Cardinal "was not a dangerous enemy, and that there was nothing to fear from him." They were soon to be disillusioned.

For some time past Marie de' Medici had been anxious for the marriage of her younger son, Gaston, Duc d'Anjou, officially styled *Monsieur*, now in his eighteenth year. A lively, frivolous, dissipated youth, who, when the shades of evening fell, loved nothing better than to escape from the Louvre and scour the streets in search of adventures, Gaston presented a singular contrast to his austere and melancholy brother; but, since his vices were such as the courtiers loved, he was as popular with them as the King was the reverse; and it was an open secret that the majority of them looked forward with pleasurable anticipation to the not unlikely event of his succession to the throne. The lady whom the Queen-Mother had chosen as a wife for Gaston was Marie de Bourbon, only daughter of the last Duc de Bourbon-Montpensier, an attractive and amiable princess, and the richest heiress in France. Richelieu, after some hesitation, decided for the match, influenced, it would seem, by the consideration



that, if *Monsieur* were ever so ill-advised as to raise the standard of revolt, there would be no foreign alliance for him to rely upon; Louis XIII. expressed his approval, and nothing remained but to obtain the consent of Gaston.

And then the trouble began.

For various reasons, the idea of this marriage was regarded with the strongest disapproval by quite a number of illustrious personages. The young Comte de Soissons,<sup>1</sup> who wanted Mlle. de Montpensier himself, was furiously indignant, declaring that Marie de' Medici had promised him the lady's hand during her regency; and his mother, the beautiful and ambitious Anne de Montafié, warmly supported his protests. The Condés naturally desired to see *Monsieur* remain unmarried, since he alone stood before them in the line of succession, or, if this could not be, to marry him to their own daughter, the little Anne Geneviève de Bourbon (afterwards the celebrated Duchesse de Longueville). The younger branches of the Guise family viewed with jealousy the increased importance which the head of their House—who had married Mlle. de Montpensier's widowed mother—would derive from the elevation of his step-daughter. Finally, Anne of Austria, who had no children, saw in this alliance the crown of her disgrace, the last blow to her hopes, fearing that a sister-in-law who was able to become a mother would efface her altogether. She accordingly determined "to do everything she could to stop the marriage,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Louis de Bourbon, son of Charles de Bourbon, younger son of Louis I., Prince de Condé, the celebrated Huguenot leader, by his second marriage with Françoise d'Orléans-Longueville. Born May 11, 1604; killed at the battle of la Marfée, June 6, 1641. He, at this time, held the offices of Grand Master of France and Governor of Dauphiné.

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*. "The Queen [Anne of Austria] did me the honour to tell me that she did then everything she could to stop the marriage of *Monsieur* . . . because she believed that this marriage, which the Queen-Mother desired, was altogether contrary to her interests, being certain that, if this princess were to have children, she would no longer enjoy any consideration."

and applied to her customary confidante, Madame de Chevreuse, for her advice and co-operation. The latter embraced the Queen's cause with all the energy and devotion in her character, and began to pull the strings in every direction. Such was the origin of an affair which began by being merely an intrigue of the Court, and which ended by becoming, according to the saying of Richelieu, "one of the most frightful conspiracies of which histories have made mention."<sup>1</sup>

The object of Anne of Austria and Madame de Chevreuse was to persuade *Monsieur* to refuse the bride who was offered him. Well, *Monsieur* all his life had his favourites for masters, and to reach him it was necessary to gain a man who at this time was in possession of his confidence and almost of his person, his *gouverneur*, the *Surintendant* of his Household, the chief of his council—the Maréchal d'Ornano. It was to him that they accordingly addressed themselves.

Ornano was a Corsican, the son of Alphonse d'Ornano, a distinguished soldier, who had served France loyally and well, and the grandson of the celebrated patriot Sampiero, who had offered so heroic a resistance to the Genoese. He himself was a very capable soldier and a man of considerable ability in other directions, and after being appointed to the command of the Corsicans in the French service, Counsellor of State, and Lieutenant of the King in Normandy, in 1619 Luynes conferred upon him the charges of *gouverneur* of the Duc d'Anjou and *Surintendant* of the young prince's Household. La Vieuville, who, on the death of the Constable, became the nominal head of the Government, relieved him of them and caused him to be thrown into the Bastille, on the well-grounded suspicion that he was developing ambition in his pupil. But when Richelieu succeeded to the control of affairs, he

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

was set at liberty, restored to his offices, and, at the beginning of 1626, created *maréchal de France*, in the hope of inducing him to lend his support to the Montpensier marriage.

Richelieu, then, might reasonably have expected some gratitude from Ornano, but, unfortunately, gratitude found no place in the Corsican's nature. Bold and audacious, he urged without ceasing the vain and feeble young prince over whom he had acquired so great an ascendancy to assert his claims to the place in the State to which his birth entitled him, in the belief that his patron's elevation would mean his own. When Gaston demanded a place in the Council, he demanded to accompany him, with the rank and title of Secretary of State, and the refusal he received had greatly incensed him against Richelieu, and determined him to seek some means of compassing the overthrow of the Minister who had thwarted his ambition.

Madame de Chevreuse had long been on friendly terms with Ornano. The latter had been one of the principal adherents of Luynes in his conspiracy against the *Maréchal d'Ancre*, and it was to Luynes, as we have mentioned, that he owed his nomination as *gouverneur* to the Duc d'Anjou. She knew his restless and ambitious character, and was aware of the grievance that he cherished against Richelieu ; and she anticipated little difficulty in gaining him over to the Queen's cause. In order, however, to leave nothing to chance, she sent to him the *Princesse de Condé*—that beautiful Charlotte de Montmorency, who had inspired the late King with so violent a passion, and of whom Ornano, undaunted by the fact that he was "the ugliest man possible to imagine," was also a *soupirant*. The blandishments of *Madame la Princesse* banished any lingering scruples which the marshal might have entertained ; he declared himself a devoted servant

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Richelieu, although he had eyes and ears everywhere at his service, had not as yet received anything more than vague warnings as to the designs of his enemies. However, these had been sufficient for him to divine that some plot hostile to the existing order of things was in agitation, and that *Monsieur* was concerned in it.

Immediately after Easter, the Court quitted Paris for Fontainebleau. On the morrow of its arrival, *Monsieur* had an interview with the King, in which he declared that it was "a reproach and a shame to him that, being his Majesty's brother, he had neither share nor influence in affairs of State." He then demanded a seat in the Council, and, at the same time, angrily declined the hand of Mlle. de Montpensier, on the ground that his friends were of opinion that "a foreign alliance was necessary for his honour and prosperity." Louis replied that he would

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Whatever the object of the conspiracy, there can be no possible doubt that Madame de Chevreuse was privy to it, if not its prime instigator ; and it may therefore be regarded as a singular illustration of the irony of Fate that the indiscretion of the most devoted of her admirers should have been the means of putting her enemy on his guard.

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similar hope, if she judged that she would be able in this way to decide him and arrive at her ends."

The duchess was indefatigable in her efforts to secure recruits for the cause, and made use of all her charms to overcome their scruples. She was but too successful.

There was then in the King's Household itself, and very near his Majesty's person, in virtue of his office as Master of the Wardrobe, a young nobleman of twenty-seven, Henri de Talleyrand, Comte de Chalais, a member of an ancient sovereign House of Périgord, and, through his mother, a grandson of the Maréchal de Montluc, author of those celebrated *Commentaires* to which Henri IV. gave the name of "The Soldier's Bible." "M. de Chalais," writes Fontenoy-Mareuil, "was young, well-made, very adroit at all kinds of exercises, but, above all, very agreeable company, which rendered him a favourite with the ladies, who ruined him."<sup>1</sup> Brave to rashness, he had gained distinction on both the field of battle and on that of honour, and a duel he had fought with the Comte de Pontgibault, in which the latter had been killed, was long talked of.

Chalais was so fortunate as to be a favourite of both the King and his brother, which would make his support of peculiar value to the cabal, since he would be able to add his persuasions to theirs to induce *Monsieur* to refuse his consent to the marriage, and, at the same time, serve their interests with Louis XIII., by misleading him as to the intentions of the malcontents. Since, however, he stood high in the good graces of the King and was not unfavourably regarded by the Cardinal, it seemed improbable that he would consent to sacrifice his prospects of advancement and the post of colonel of the light cavalry, which he was understood to "ambition," to follow the fortunes of *Monsieur*.

But, unhappily for himself, there was something which

M. de Chalais coveted infinitely more than the command of the light cavalry. For some time past he had been madly enamoured of Madame de Chevreuse, and, though his goddess had not yet condescended to accept his devotion, having the bad taste to prefer that of Lord Holland, he had refused to abandon hope. Suddenly, however, to his inexpressible joy, he perceived indications that she was no longer insensible; she smiled upon him; she began actually to seek his society. Oblivious of everything but this fatal passion, forgetting his loyalty to his King, his hopes of advancement, the infatuated young man allowed the siren to lead him whither she willed, and, ere he had fully realised his position, he found himself precipitated into the very thick of the conspiracy which was to bring him to his doom.

What precisely were the relations between Madame de Chevreuse and Chalais? Did she surrender herself to him, or did she merely lure him on to do her bidding "by those intoxicating hopes which transform their object, as yet little known, into a divinity whose possession one would purchase at the cost of any sacrifice"?<sup>1</sup> It is a difficult question to answer, and to discuss it would scarcely be profitable. What is material, is that Chalais's passion for the beautiful duchess proved his ruin.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Victor Cousin, in his interesting article, *la Conspiration de Henri de Talleyrand, Comte de Chalais*, in the *Journal des Savants*, 1862, in which, by the way, he takes an entirely different view of the relations between Madame de Chevreuse and Chalais from that which he had propounded in his monograph on the former, published some years earlier. In this he maintains, though without citing any contemporary authority, that, at the time of the Montpensier marriage-project, the duchess was already the mistress of Chalais, and that, so far from engaging the count in the conspiracy to prevent it, she herself joined it only out of her affection for him and her loyalty to Anne of Austria; while in the *Journal des Savants* he represents Chalais as the dupe of his passions and as "spurred on incessantly by Madame de Chevreuse." Singularly enough, the distinguished historian does not vouchsafe us any explanation of the error into which he had fallen in his book.

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consider his request and give him an answer in a few days. The young prince managed to curb his impatience for three or four, and then despatched Ornano to voice his complaints to the Cardinal ; but could get nothing more satisfactory from his Eminence than an assurance that he was " the humble servant of *Monsieur*." In high indignation, Gaston sought out his mother and announced his intention of quitting the Court, adding, it is said, threats as to what would follow his departure. Marie soothed him by promising that the Council should meet to consider his demands, and he agreed to await its decision.

Meanwhile, Louis XIII. had consulted Richelieu, who had stimulated his resentment against the pretensions that had been suggested to his brother, and warned him that, " in the matter of conspiracies, it was almost impossible to have mathematical proofs, and that, when the circumstances were pressing, presumption ought to take their place." The arrest of Ornano was then decided upon.

With that dissimulation which he loved to display on such occasions, the King invited Ornano to dinner, and treated him with unusual condescension. Dinner over, he led his guest into the Cour du Cheval Blanc, where he had promised to review his Guards, and, by way of attention, pointed out to him the chamber where the Maréchal de Biron had been temporarily confined after his arrest in 1602, pending his removal to the Bastille. That night, Ornano was himself arrested and conducted to the same apartment (May 4, 1626).

At the first news of the arrest of Ornano, which was brought to him shortly after he had retired to rest, by one of his favourites, Puylaurens, *Monsieur*, beside himself with fury, hurriedly dressed, and rushed off to the King and Queen-Mother to demand the immediate release of the marshal, but he was informed that their Majesties could not be disturbed at that hour. On the morrow, he

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went in search of the Ministers. The first he found was the Chancellor, d'Aligre, who, intimidated by the anger of the prince, assured him that he had nothing to do with the arrest of the marshal. But when Gaston addressed himself to Richelieu, and inquired furiously : " Is it you who have dared to give this counsel to the King ? " he was met with the laconic reply : " Yes, it is I." D'Aligre was promptly disgraced for his feebleness, and the seals were given to Michel de Marillac, the *Surintendant des Finances*.

The unexpected arrest of Ornano, who on the morrow was conducted to the Château of Vincennes, fell like a thunderbolt on the heads of the conspirators. They foresaw that, if the marshal were brought to trial, not only would their designs be discovered, but their persons would be in danger, since he was not the kind of man who could be trusted to prefer death to dishonour. They therefore urged *Monsieur* to make every endeavour to procure the release of his *gouverneur*, and, if he failed, which they fully expected he would do, to take one of two courses : the first was to leave the Court, retire into some fortified place, and call his supporters to arms ; the second, to disembarass himself of the Cardinal.

As Louis XIII. and Richelieu refused to hear of the release of Ornano, and Gaston, although the Comte de Soissons offered to furnish him with a very large sum of money if he would retire from Court and declare war, hesitated to take so irrevocable a step, the Grand Prieur de Vendôme, Chalais, and some other young men prevailed upon him to have recourse to the second of the alternatives mentioned.

Richelieu was staying at his country-house at Fleury, a little beyond the Forest of Fontainebleau. Gaston, feigning a desire to be reconciled to him, was to invite himself to dinner, and arrive accompanied by a strong

party of his friends. What was to follow is disputed. Most writers assert that it was the intention of the conspirators to demand the release of Ornano, and, if this were refused, to assassinate their host out of hand, and Richelieu always maintained that his own death would have been followed by the assassination or dethronement of the King and the elevation of Gaston ; but the Cardinal's interest in exaggerating the gravity of the plot is too obvious for much importance to be attached to his opinion. A more sober version of the affair credits the conspirators with no more sinister design than that of making the Cardinal their prisoner and subsequently exchanging him for Ornano, though, even if this be correct, it might very well have had a tragic sequel.

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HENRI DE TALLEYRAND, COMTE DE CHALAIS  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY LE BERT, AFTER A DRAWING BY DUGOURC



his Eminence any further intrigues against him, accepted his services and promised to procure for him the coveted post of colonel of the light cavalry.

The Cardinal sent Valençay to Fontainebleau to inform the King, who at once despatched a troop of horse to Fleury, for the protection of his Minister. At dawn, a number of Gaston's officers arrived at Fleury, ostensibly, to announce the approaching arrival of their master and to assist in making ready for his reception ; in reality, to serve as the advance-guard of the conspirators. His Eminence received them very courteously, expressed his sense of the honour which the prince intended to do him, and, ordering his coach, set out for Fontainebleau, "in order to escort his Royal Highness."

His Royal Highness was considerably astonished when the Cardinal presented himself at his *lever* that morning and mildly reproached him for not giving him longer warning of the visit with which he intended to honour him. In order to avert suspicion as to his destination, *Monsieur* had announced his intention of hunting that day, and, as Richelieu withdrew, after handing the prince his shirt—a duty which was always performed by the prelate or noble of the highest rank present—he remarked significantly : "*Monsieur*, you have not risen early enough this morning ; you will find that your quarry is no longer at home !" Then Gaston knew that some one had betrayed him.

Thoroughly frightened, the pusillanimous prince passed from treacherous conspiracy to base submission, "with the levity of a selfish and thoughtless child, destitute of both moral sense and dignity,"<sup>1</sup> and on May 31, in the presence of the King, the Queen-Mother, and the Cardinal, signed, and swore on the Gospels to observe faithfully, a compact drawn up by Richelieu, in

<sup>1</sup> Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*.

which he engaged that "no counsel should ever be proposed or suggested to him by any one whomsoever of which he would not advise his Majesty ; that he would not keep silence concerning even the most trifling words that were spoken to him, with the object of arousing his resentment against the King and his advisers ; and that he would love and esteem those whom the King and the Queen-Mother loved."

Gaston had sworn to and signed everything that had been demanded of him, but, being as faithless as he was cowardly and selfish, he had not the remotest intention of executing his engagements. In fact, while swearing to his brother to inform him of everything contrary to his service that might come to his knowledge, he said not a word of the great conspiracy which, from the foot of the throne, had extended over the whole kingdom and even beyond the frontiers ; and when he again found himself among his partisans, he disclosed nothing of what had just taken place, but renewed all the promises that he had made them and continued to preside over their deliberations.

Chalais likewise kept his own counsel, and the conspirators appear to have entertained no suspicion that they had a traitor in their midst, and probably attributed the Fleury fiasco to some vague warning furnished the Cardinal by one or other of the secret agents whom he had in his pay. Had Chalais promptly avowed his enforced betrayal of their designs, they would certainly have proceeded with a great deal more caution, even if they had not decided to abandon the enterprise altogether. But, for a while, he appears to have been of opinion that his wisest course was to say nothing to his friends and to keep—at least to some extent—his promise to report any fresh developments to the Cardinal ; and when at length his secret was forced from him by the address of Madame



de Chevreuse, and he was involved anew in the conspiracy, its leaders were already hopelessly compromised.

Whether by Chalais or by one of his secret agents, Richelieu's attention was directed to the Duc de Vendôme, whose movements he caused to be closely watched. The duke had resolved to offer *Monsieur* an asylum in his government of Brittany, and the Cardinal ascertained that he was secretly preparing for war and that communications were passing between him and the rebellious Rochellois. Recognising how important it was to stifle at its birth the insurrection in a great province so close to La Rochelle and so exposed to an English invasion, he persuaded the King to proceed thither in person to re-establish his threatened authority. But, since he was doubtful whether his Majesty could be brought to consent to the arrest of his natural brothers, the Vendômes, he resolved to ascertain how far he was prepared to support him, and accordingly demanded permission to retire, on the ground of failing health. Louis declined his resignation in a letter which was equivalent to an oath of fidelity from the King to his Minister, and concluded with these words: "Be assured that I shall never change, and that, whoever may attack you, you shall have me for second."<sup>1</sup>

Armed with this solemn promise, Richelieu no longer hesitated to represent to the King the necessity of arresting the bastard sons of Henri IV., and Louis at once assented. On learning of the approach of the Court, the Duc de Vendôme, who was at Nantes, became very uneasy; but, since he could not refrain from paying his homage to his Sovereign without practically proclaiming himself in revolt, he charged his brother, the Grand Prior, to obtain an assurance of safety from the King. "I give

<sup>1</sup> This interesting letter is, singularly enough, not found in the Cardinal's *Mémoires*. It was first published by Père Griffet, in his *Histoire de Louis XIII.* The original was then in the possession of the Maréchal de Richelieu.

you my word," replied Louis, "that he will come to no more harm than you." Deceived by this gross equivocation, the duke joined the Court at Blois, and was very graciously received. But, two days later, both he and his brother were arrested in their beds by Du Hallier, captain of the Guards, and conducted to the Château of Amboise, where they were very strictly guarded (June 12, 1626).

It would appear that, at this juncture, Richelieu was very far from being aware of the wide range of the conspiracy, or of all its chiefs, otherwise he would scarcely have left the Comte de Soissons behind in Paris, to command there in the name of the King, or have allowed *Monsieur* to remain in the capital, subject to all the influences that were being brought to bear upon him to induce him to join Soissons and raise the standard of revolt. Gaston, however, could not make up his mind to declare himself, and, though he promised much, he did nothing; and he was still in a state of the most pitiable indecision when he received orders from the King to join him at Blois.

## CHAPTER IV

Dismay of the conspirators—Madame de Chevreuse refuses to be discouraged, and employs Chalais to persuade *Monsieur* to declare war upon the King—Chalais accompanies *Monsieur* to the Court—His intrigues—He professes the greatest devotion to the interests of Richelieu—His quarrel with the Comte de Louvigny, who denounces him to the Cardinal—His arrest—Base betrayal of his associates by *Monsieur*—Trial of Chalais—He reveals everything, with the exception of the part of Madame de Chevreuse in the affair—His letters to the duchess—Madame de Chevreuse, fearing to incriminate herself, confines her replies to verbal messages, which do not appear to have reached her imprisoned lover—Chalais, persuaded by the Cardinal that the duchess has deceived him, denounces her also, in the hope of saving his life—But he is, nevertheless, condemned to death—He retracts all his accusations against Madame de Chevreuse—His horrible execution—Death of Ornano and of the Grand Prieur de Vendôme—Marriage of *Monsieur* with Mlle. de Montpensier—Anne of Austria summoned before the Council—A biting retort—Humiliations inflicted upon the Queen—Madame de Chevreuse is exiled to Dampierre, and subsequently ordered to leave France—She departs for Nancy, vowing vengeance upon her enemies.

THE news of the arrest of the Vendômes, following upon that of Ornano and the miscarriage of the Fleury affair, filled the conspirators with dismay. They feared the effect of these repeated reverses upon the timid and vacillating mind of *Monsieur*, who, deprived of both the marshal and the Grand Prior—the two persons who had exercised the most influence over him—would be more difficult to decide than ever ; and the less resolute began to entertain serious doubts as to the wisdom of proceeding with the enterprise. Madame de Chevreuse, however, refused to be discouraged. She had surprised Chalais's secret, won him back to the cause, and compelled him to

commit himself more deeply than ever ; and she believed that she had, in the influence he possessed over *Monsieur*, a means which, if well employed, might re-establish everything. She proceeded to exploit it with her usual audacity and address, and, spurred on by his passion for the beautiful duchess, Chalais lost no occasion of urging *Monsieur* to take to flight and to throw himself into some fortified place.

Still wavering, though all but persuaded, Gaston quitted Paris and journeyed by easy stages towards the Loire. Chalais accompanied him, as did the two young favourites of the duke, Puylaurens and Bois d'Annemetz, the latter of whom has left us an interesting, though not altogether reliable account, of the conspiracy in which he was engaged.<sup>1</sup> They united their entreaties to those of Chalais, and, by the time they reached Blois, *Monsieur* appeared to have at last made up his mind to follow the counsels which had been so long tendered him. But the question of the place in which Gaston should take refuge raised a fresh difficulty. The Comte de Soissons had advised La Rochelle, and though Gaston expressed his willingness to retire to the Huguenot stronghold, Puylaurens and Bois d'Annemetz dissuaded him, representing that such a step would give offence to the more bigoted Catholics among his partisans. Finally, having received what was believed to be trustworthy information that the Duc d'Épernon, Governor of the Angoumois and the Pays des Trois Évêchés, (Metz, Toul, and Verdun), was in secret his partisan, *Monsieur* wrote to him a letter in his own hand, dictated by Bois d'Annemetz, inviting him to declare in his favour ; while Chalais despatched a messenger to the Marquis de la Valette, d'Épernon's eldest son, who commanded in Metz, requesting him to

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires d'un Favori du duc d'Orléans*, in *Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France*, Série 2, tom. iii.

receive the prince in that fortress. "You see that I trust you," observed he to Puylaurens and Bois d'Annemetz, when he informed them of what he had done. "If anything of our design becomes known, you will be treated like La Môle and Coconnas, and I even worse."<sup>1</sup>

While Chalais was labouring thus to merit the favours of Madame de Chevreuse, whom he had the happiness of seeing again when he joined the Court at Blois, to lull the suspicions of Richelieu, he had continued to profess the greatest devotion to his interests and gave him sometimes useful information. It is not surprising that this double game should have rendered the count an object of suspicion to many persons, and the author of the *Mémoires d'un Favori* accuses him of wishing to safeguard himself whichever side was ultimately victorious; while Fontenay-Mareuil declares that he would have gone over altogether to the Cardinal, but "Madame de Chevreuse reproached him so bitterly and pressed him so strongly, that, since scarcely anything was impossible to a woman so beautiful and so intelligent, he was unable to resist her and preferred to fail the Cardinal de Richelieu and himself than her." There can be no question, however, that Madame de Chevreuse knew the secret of Chalais's communications with the Cardinal, and that he was acting with her full approval.

It was a dangerous game to play for long with a personage so vigilant and penetrating as Richelieu. The reports which daily reached the Cardinal from his secret agents all tended to show that *Monsieur* had grossly violated the solemn pledges that he had given at Fontaine-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires d'un Favori du duc d'Orléans*. La Mole and Coconnas were the two favourites of François de Valois, Duc d'Anjou, the younger brother of Charles IX. and Henri III., who were executed in 1574, at the time of the Conspiracy of the *Politiques*, for having planned the escape of their master and the King of Navarre from the Court. See the author's "Queen Margot" (London, Harpers: New York, Scribners, 1906).

bleau, and that want of courage alone prevented him from throwing aside the mask ; and he found it difficult to reconcile Chalais's assurances of devotion to himself with those midnight visits *en robe de chambre* which, his spies informed him, the count was in the habit of paying to Gaston's apartments. Already he was more than half-convinced that Chalais was playing him false ; already he had more than once asked himself on which side this young man really was, when an act of shameful treachery solved the question.

Among the partisans of *Monsieur*, was Roger de Gramont, Comte de Louvigny, a younger brother of the future Duc and Maréchal de Gramont. Louvigny had been one of the foremost in encouraging Gaston to resist the royal authority, and had been concerned in the Fleury affair ; and Chalais, with whom he was on terms of close friendship, had confided to him more than one important secret. At Saumur, however, whither the Court proceeded after leaving Blois, they quarrelled violently. Some pretend that Louvigny had fallen in love with Madame de Chevreuse, and was jealous of the preference which that lady showed for the Master of the Wardrobe. Others say that Louvigny, being about to engage in an "affair of honour" with the Comte de Candale, younger son of the Duc d'Épernon, and brother of the Marquis de la Valette, asked Chalais to act as his second ; that the latter, who had the strongest reasons for not offending the d'Épernons, begged to be excused, and that Louvigny, beside himself with rage, exclaimed : "I see what it is ; you wish to break off your friendship with me ; I will change my friends and my party also !"

Perhaps, however, Madame de Chevreuse was the cause, and Chalais's refusal merely the pretext, of the rupture between the two young men, which ended in Louvigny going to the Cardinal and telling him all that he knew

and a good deal that he seems to have merely invented, such as that Chalais meditated the death of the King, by scratching him slightly on the neck with a poisoned pin when, as Master of the Wardrobe, he was adjusting his ruff.

Richelieu lost no time in taking action, and on July 8 Chalais was arrested at Nantes, where the Court had just arrived, and imprisoned in a gloomy dungeon in the basement of one of the towers of the château. At the same time, the Cardinal requested the King to send for his brother, and succeeded in reducing that miserable prince to a condition of such abject submission that, despicable as had been his conduct at Fontainebleau a few weeks earlier, he, on this occasion, far surpassed it, and plunged into a veritable abyss of infamy.

Not only did he consent to the marriage against which he had so indignantly protested, but he furnished the most damning evidence against the leaders of the conspiracy of which he was the chief. He revealed all the communications which Ornano had entered into with the discontented nobles and with foreign princes, undeterred by the knowledge that the unfortunate marshal, for whom he had once shown so much zeal, was already awaiting his trial on a capital charge. He declared that it was the Grand Prieur de Vendôme, likewise in Richelieu's clutches, who had counselled him to go to Fleury and assassinate the Cardinal if he refused to set Ornano at liberty. He denounced the Comte de Soissons, the Duc de Longueville, the Comte de Soubise, and many others, some of whom had but a very remote connection with the conspiracy. And he gave so circumstantial an account of his relations with Chalais, and of the persistent efforts the latter had made to push him into open revolt, that he rendered it quite futile for that misguided young man to attempt any defence. Finally, he confessed that

Anne of Austria had several times entreated him to refuse his consent to the marriage proposed to him, except on condition that Ornano was set at liberty, and declared that, more than two years before, Madame de Chevreuse had advised him to remain unmarried, promising that, in the event of the King's death, he should marry the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

The cowardice of *Monsieur* would be intelligible if he had entertained any fear for his life, but in no conceivable circumstances could that have been in any danger. The worst that could have happened to him, had he declined to betray his associates, would have been a term of more or less nominal imprisonment, such as that inflicted by Charles IX. and Henry III. upon their rebellious younger brother, François de Valois, who also, it may be mentioned, bore the titles of Duc d'Anjou and *Monsieur*; and, since he had consented to marry Mlle. de Montpensier, he would almost certainly have escaped even that.

What, then, is the explanation? It is that, since the conspiracy intended to elevate him to a power and influence in the State which should even overshadow that of the King had so ignominiously failed, he was anxious to make as good a bargain as he could with his royal brother and the Cardinal, and assure himself, at least, of a rich appanage. In one word, it was greed! It was for this that he betrayed his friends, and not only betrayed them, but left them to their fate, since no one can doubt that, had he chosen, he might easily have made the pardon of the prisoners the condition of his marriage with Mlle. de Montpensier, his obedience to the King's authority, and his reconciliation with the Cardinal. "The *procès-verbaux* which comprise the confessions of *Monsieur*," writes Victor Cousin, in his admirable account of the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Pièces du procès de Henri de Talleyrand, comte de Chalais*, Archives des Affaires étrangères, tom. xxxix.; Richelieu, *Mémoires*.



of the Queen, and promised to do all in his power to dissuade *Monsieur* from making Mlle. de Montpensier his wife.

In this task Ornano did not lack coadjutors, and every day the "*Conspiration des Dames*," as the anti-marriage cabal was at first called, gathered fresh adherents. The Dowager-Comtesse de Soissons was beloved by Alexandre de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France, the younger of Henri IV.'s two sons by Gabrielle d'Estrées, an unquiet spirit, with a positive passion for mischievous intrigue, who nursed a grievance against Richelieu for having refused him permission to treat with the Duc de Montmorency for the office of Grand Admiral. She had little difficulty in persuading him to join the conspiracy, and the Grand Prior, in his turn, and with equal facility, secured the adhesion of his elder brother, César, Duc de Vendôme—"César Monsieur"—a haughty and turbulent prince, who had played a prominent part in the troubles of the regency. The gay and foolhardy young courtiers, in whose company *Monsieur* passed the greater part of his time—Du Lude, La Rivière, Louvigny, Puylaurens, Bois d'Annemetz, and others—espoused the same cause almost as one man, either from dislike of the Cardinal, or in the hope that a breach between their patron and the King would redound to their advantage.

Every imaginable argument was employed by the cabal to dissuade *Monsieur* from a marriage which threatened so many interests. They appealed, in turn, to his love of pleasure, to his vanity, and to his ambition. They pointed out that the joyous, irresponsible life which he had hitherto led would no longer be possible when once he had taken a wife, and that, from that moment, the King would insist on his conducting himself with a decorum which could not fail to be most irksome to so high-spirited a prince. They lamented the docility which gave him the air of being a

child in the hands of his mother, his brother, and the Cardinal, and deprived him of all importance in the eyes of France and of Europe, and urged him to assert his independence by declining to allow a wife to be chosen for him. They reminded him that, although Mlle. de Montpensier was undoubtedly a great heiress, she was one of his brother's subjects, and that, by marrying her, he would fall into greater subjection than ever to the King's authority, since his fortune and lands would always remain in his Majesty's power ; and if, at any future time, he happened to stand in need of foreign assistance, there would not be a Sovereign in Europe to whom he could appeal. They dangled before his eyes the prospect of a splendid foreign alliance, such as a marriage with the Infanta Margaret, once the betrothed of Charles I. of England, and afterwards the consort of the Emperor Ferdinand III. ; while, as an alternative, it was even hinted that, in the event of the death of Louis XIII., who, they insisted, was in so dangerous a state of health that he could not possibly live much longer, the widowed Queen, of whom *Monsieur* was a great admirer, would be willing to bestow her hand upon him.

Anne of Austria always indignantly denied that she ever entertained such an idea, and it is probable that she spoke the truth. At the same time, it is certain that it was discussed in all seriousness by *Monsieur* and his friends ; and, observes Victor Cousin,<sup>1</sup> " we know enough of Madame de Chevreuse to be sure that she would not have scrupled to compromise the Queen a little in order to serve her better, and that she would not have hesitated, without speaking of it to the Queen, to tickle the credulous ears of the young prince with a

<sup>1</sup> *La Conspiration de Henri de Talleyrand, Comte de Chalais : Journal des Savants*, 1862. In his confession after the arrest of Chalais, *Monsieur* declared that Madame de Chevreuse had actually done so.

spiracy, of which we have spoken elsewhere, "is a curious and sad monument of one of the greatest infamies which history records. . . . The more we examine it, the more it revolts us. His object, the motive which has determined him, is neither ambition, nor love, nor pride, nor vengeance; it is greed of money, the desire for a rich appanage. The persons who are to be his victims are his favourite, Chalais; his own *gouverneur*, Ornano; his two natural brothers, the Vendômes; and two women who trusted him, the Queen and Madame de Chevreuse. Let us add that the Comte de Soissons is the only one who has succeeded in effecting his escape, and that all the others—Chalais, Ornano, the Vendômes—are in the power of the terrible Cardinal, and that his confessions deliver them to the scaffold, while he was able easily to save them all, by declaring himself ready to marry Mlle. de Montpensier, to serve loyally the King, and to live on good terms with his Minister, on condition that the prisoners were set at liberty and the proceedings commenced against them abandoned. Richelieu would have been forced to accept this condition, and he would have embraced it with joy if, at this price, he had been really able to gain him who to-morrow might be his King and heir of the crown of Louis XIII., already very ill and still childless."

It was decided to bring Chalais to trial before one of those special commissions to which Richelieu henceforth assigned most State prosecutions, for greater certainty of result. The commission was composed of Counsellors of State, *maîtres des requêtes*, and counsellors of the Parlement of Rennes, among whom was Joachim Descartes, the father of the philosopher, then still unknown. It assembled at Nantes, under the presidency of the new Chancellor, Michel de Marillac, and no one doubted that the Cardinal intended to make a terrible example of the unfortunate admirer of Madame de Chevreuse.

For, although the most serious accusation—that of having meditated the assassination of the King—was not pressed, the charges against Chalais were of the gravest possible character, the evidence in support of them overwhelming. It is true that he was not one of the originators of the conspiracy, but he was associated with it at an early stage, and, if he had known comparatively little of the intrigues of Ornano, he had enjoyed the full confidence of both the Grand Prior and the Comte de Soissons, and, after the arrest of the former, had warned the latter to keep away from the Court, lest a like fate should befall him. Later, he had made the most persistent efforts to induce the brother of the King to retire into some fortified place and call upon his partisans to take up arms, and had sent a message to the commandant of Metz, inviting him to receive the prince. This was alone sufficient to constitute a State crime of the first magnitude.

There were also against Chalais many aggravating circumstances. He was Master of the Wardrobe—an important officer of the King's Household—one who was expected to set an example of loyalty and devotion to others, and yet he had not scrupled to take part in a conspiracy against the authority of the King. And what was perhaps still more unfortunate for him, he had insinuated himself into the confidence of Richelieu and had affected the greatest zeal for his interests, while all the time he was conspiring with the Cardinal's enemies.

Finally, it was very evident that an example was needed to teach the turbulent nobility a salutary lesson, and to show them that they could no longer conspire with impunity against the royal authority. Well, the Duc de Vendôme and the Grand Prior were brothers of Louis XIII., and, as such, must be permitted to keep their heads on their shoulders; Soissons had prudently

put the frontier between himself and the Cardinal ; while Ornano, slowly dying of fever at Vincennes, would soon answer for his conduct before a higher justice than that of the King. Chalais was, then, plainly designed as the victim who was to expiate the treason of more illustrious personages.

The unfortunate young man comprehended this, and his courage failed him. He had braved death many a time on the battlefield and on the duelling-ground ; he would have led the forlornest of hopes, or faced the most redoubtable of *bretteurs*, without flinching ; but he shrank in terror from the shadow of the headsman's axe. With the scaffold before his eyes, he revealed himself as the most contemptible of poltroons, and was prepared to rival in baseness even *Monsieur* himself.

Almost from the day of his arrest he besieged the King and the Cardinal with supplications for pardon, couched in the most abject terms. He made the fullest confession that could possibly be desired, revealed without hesitation the names of his accomplices, and even indicated as favourable to the cause of *Monsieur* and opposed to the Cardinal a number of other persons. Then he reminded Richelieu that, if he had not been assassinated at Fleury, he owed it to information which his intimacy with *Monsieur* had enabled him to furnish, and warning him that, when Gaston returned to Paris, his evil counsellors would probably incite him to some further violence, promised, if his life and liberty were granted him, to devote them to the service of the King and his Eminence, by keeping a vigilant watch on the actions of the prince and his friends and faithfully reporting to the Cardinal any suspicious circumstances that might come to his knowledge.

"It is necessary for you," he writes, "to have some agent near *Monsieur*. There are many Grand Priors in

France, and *Monsieur* will see many times a day persons who have little love for you. If the Marshal [Ornano] has been sufficiently ungrateful to misunderstand the good offices that you have rendered him, and, at the end of sixteen months, to deceive you, be assured that I am no Corsican, and that in sixteen centuries that will not enter my mind."<sup>1</sup> He also addressed epistles in the same strain to the Queen-Mother, who, he knew, was as anxious to ascertain what was going on in her younger son's *entourage* as the Cardinal, and entreated her to hasten his deliverance, as it was of the utmost importance for the service of the King.

While denouncing without hesitation his accomplices, Chalais, to the mortification of Richelieu, for some time kept faith with Madame de Chevreuse, and neither in his official depositions nor in the private communications which he made to the Cardinal was her name pronounced. His passion for this woman who had lured him to his destruction was still as potent as ever, and from his gloomy dungeon he addressed to her letters filled with those extravagant expressions of adoration which the lovers of those days were wont to employ, but which come somewhat strangely from a man menaced by a traitor's death.

"If my complaints," he writes, "have moved with compassion the most insensible hearts, when my sun failed to shine in the alleys dedicated to love, where will be those who do not share my tears in a prison into which the sun's rays can never enter, and in which my lot is so much the harder in that I am forbidden to make known to her my cruel martyrdom? In this perplexity, I felicitate myself on having a master who makes me suffer only in body, and murmur against the marvels of

<sup>1</sup> La Borde, *Procès de Henri de Talleyrand, comte de Chalais* (London, 1781).

that sun whose absence is killing the soul, and brings about such a metamorphosis that I am no longer myself save in the persistence of adoring it ; and my eyes, which survive for that alone, are justly punished for their too great presumption by the shedding of more tears than ever love caused to flow."

And again :

"Since my life depends on you, I fear not to hazard it for you, to make you understand that I love you. Accept, then, this little testimony and do not condemn my temerity. If those beautiful eyes that I adore regard this letter, I augur well for my fortune, and, if the contrary happens, I no longer desire my liberty, because in it I shall find my punishment."

And in a third letter :

"It is not from this hour that I have recognised the divinity in your beauty, but certainly I begin to learn that one must serve you as a goddess, since I am not permitted to make you understand my love without hazarding my life. Take care of it, then, since it is dedicated to you, and, if you esteem it worthy of being preserved, tell the companion of my misfortunes to remind you sometimes that I am the most unhappy of men. It is only necessary to say 'yes.'"<sup>1</sup>

These tender epistles were entrusted by Chalais to his Basque servant, Martin de Sunich, who passed them on to a brother of his named Joannès, for transmission to Madame de Chevreuse. The duchess did not dare to reply in writing, well aware that there was a very remote chance of any letter reaching her imprisoned lover without passing through the Cardinal's hands, and accordingly confined herself to verbal messages.

"I have given your letter to Madame," writes Joannès to his brother, under date August 4. "She told me that she

<sup>1</sup> La Borde.

does not send any reply, and that her life and her liberty depend on it. She said to me that she will serve him [Chalais] without writing. She kisses his hands a hundred thousand times." From Joannès's next letter, written three days later, we learn that the lady is prepared to do for Chalais more than he asks, but is unable to write ; and in a subsequent one, written at a moment when matters were beginning to look blacker than ever for the prisoner, the humble ambassador of Love writes : " Madame bids you tell Monsieur that she recommends herself to him a thousand times ; that she begs him to think of Our Lord ; and that she is sending to all the convents in France to have prayers offered up for him and for myself, who fail not to pray to God and to Saint-Nicolas to deliver the prisoner." <sup>1</sup>

Lovers are proverbially unreasonable, and the terrible situation in which Chalais found himself was scarcely conducive to calmness of judgment. The not unnatural refusal of his mistress to incriminate herself by writing, or—more probably—the absence of any message from her, for it is very doubtful whether he received any of his servant's letters, wounded him to the quick, and he became a prey to all kinds of suspicions. The astute Richelieu, who had several interviews with the prisoner, speedily divined what was in his mind, and did not fail to turn it to account. He insinuated that Madame de Chevreuse had already forgotten her unfortunate admirer and was occupied with other love-affairs, and that she had saved herself at his expense.

To endeavour to persuade an accused person to betray his accomplices, by representing that he had already been betrayed by them, was a common enough manœuvre in those days ; but Chalais does not appear to have even suspected the snare that was laid for him, and fell headlong

<sup>1</sup> La Borde,



into it. "Since you have done me the honour to tell me that she has slandered me," he wrote to Richelieu, "I have no longer any object but that of saving myself." And, exasperated to the last degree against the woman who, he believed, had repaid his devotion by the basest ingratitude and perfidy, and in the delusive hope that further important revelations might induce the Cardinal to spare his life, he was gradually led to make the gravest accusations against the duchess. It was she, he declared, who had been the life and soul of the conspiracy ; who had persuaded him to do violence to those sentiments of loyalty and devotion to the King in which until then he had never wavered and to take part in it ; who had endeavoured to associate the Prince de Condé and the Duc de Montmorency with the Comte de Soissons ; who had conducted the negotiations with the Huguenots, through the medium of her aunt, Madame de Rohan. And it was she who had instigated the Grand Prior to attempt the assassination of the Cardinal, and who had urged the friends of *Monsieur* to persuade him to leave the Court and take up arms against the King.

Then, having concluded his denunciations of her to whom he had just been addressing such extravagant expressions of devotion, he descended to the very depths of baseness, by offering to play the spy upon Madame de Chevreuse and the Queen, as he had promised to do upon *Monsieur*.

It was all useless. So soon as Richelieu judged that he had extracted from the prisoner all the information that he could hope for, the proceedings were hurried on, and on August 18 the court pronounced the inevitable sentence, and "declared Henri de Talleyrand, Sieur de Chalais, Master of the Wardrobe to the King, attainted and convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté* ; for reparation whereof it condemned him to be taken by the executioner of the High Justice, and conducted, with bare head, to

the Place de Bouffay of Nantes, and there, on a scaffold, which should be erected for that purpose, to have his head struck off and placed on a pike on the Porte de Sauvetour, his body to be quartered and fastened to gibbets at the four principal avenues of the said town, and that, before execution, he should be subjected to torture, for the revelation of his accomplices." The court further declared "all the goods, movable and immovable, of the said Talleyrand forfeited to the King, the sum of 619 livres being first deducted to be applied to works of piety in the towns of Rennes and Nantes, his posterity ignoble and *roturière* and deprived of all the privileges of the nobility, and ordered the residences of the said Sieur de Talleyrand to be demolished and his woods cut down to a man's height from the ground." <sup>1</sup>

This barbarous sentence was modified by the King, who, "yielding to the very humble prayer of the Dame de Chalais, mother of the said Chalais, and to several of his faithful and affectionate subjects, to whom the said Chalais was related," directed that, after decapitation, the body should be given to his mother for burial in holy ground." His Majesty also annulled the attainder passed upon the descendants of the condemned.

And now followed a singular scene.

After the commissioners, in accordance with the directions of the King, had revised their decree, the clerk to the court and two counsellors proceeded to Chalais's dungeon to communicate it to the condemned man. The counsellors inquired if he had anything further to say ; to which he replied that he had said everything and more than everything. Asked to explain his meaning, he answered : "The last deposition I made is entirely false in that which concerns a certain lady [Madame de Chevreuse]. What I said was for the purpose of saving my life."

<sup>1</sup> La Borde.

An officer of the Garde Écossaise named Lamont, to whose care Chalais had been confided by the Cardinal, with orders to insinuate himself into his confidence and induce him to talk freely about the supposed wrongs he had suffered at the hands of Madame de Chevreuse, here angrily interrupted him.

"Monsieur," said he, "render thanks to God by speaking the truth. You well remember that, in familiar conversation with me, you told me almost all that is contained in the deposition of your own free will; some time before you made it, and on several occasions since."

Chalais answered that he had never spoken of the matters referred to in conversation with Lamont, and that in the deposition he had lied, in order to save his life.

Lamont persisted that he had spoken of them several times, even as recently as the previous day, when no hope of saving his life remained; that not only had he spoken of them, but that he had written letters to Madame de Chevreuse in which the same matters were mentioned; that he had seen him write them, and that, before doing so, he had conferred with him.

To this Chalais replied that he could not recollect very well what he had said, even on the previous day, since his mind was very troubled. As for the letters, he did not deny having written them, but declared that the "invectives and insults" contained therein were false.

Lamont, growing more angry, for Chalais's earnestness was evidently making an impression on the two counsellors, then said that "the things done by Madame de Chevreuse could not be effaced by his wishing to deny them, and that he entreated him to reflect on the state in which he was, and to render glory to God by speaking the truth."

But Chalais persisted in his denials, and declared that "what he had written, he had written in the extremity of

rage, and by reason of an erroneous belief which he entertained that she [Madame de Chevreuse] had deceived him."<sup>1</sup>

After Chalais's recantation had been signed and attested and the counsellors had retired, the condemned man sent for his confessor and charged him to inform the King that everything that he had said against the Queen and Madame de Chevreuse was false, and then to go to the Queen and crave her Majesty's pardon for having dragged her name into such an affair. Chalais's mother also went to Anne of Austria, "to make reparation to her on his behalf."<sup>2</sup>

In the hope that the entreaties of *Monsieur*, who had been shamed into making some belated efforts to induce the King to spare Chalais's life, might eventually prevail, and that the gain of a few days might mean his salvation, the friends of the condemned, by dint of money and threats, had persuaded the executioner of Nantes to leave the town.<sup>3</sup> Their intervention merely served to make the unhappy man's end more cruel, for, instead of postponing the execution until the headsman of Rennes could be fetched, Richelieu sent for a criminal then lying under sentence of death in the prison of Nantes, who, on a promise that he should be accorded his life, undertook to replace him. This improvised executioner bungled his task in the most shocking manner, and, according to one contemporary account, more than thirty blows were required before the head at last fell.<sup>4</sup> The body of

<sup>1</sup> La Borde.

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Motteville.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Récit véritable de l'Exécution du comte de Chalais* (Paris, 1626), they had so contrived that not only was the executioner of Nantes missing, but those of all the neighbouring towns were either absent or ill.

<sup>4</sup> *Extrait de deux Lettres touchant la mort de M. de Chalais*, published by Aubéry; *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu*. The horrible tortures inflicted on the condemned are accounted for by the fact that the executioner of Nantes had taken away or hidden his axe, and that his substitute was obliged to make use of unsuitable weapons, "They brought from the prisons of this town two men destined for the

Chalais was given to his mother, who caused it to be interred before the high altar in the Church of the Franciscans of Nantes.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the end of Chalais and of the conspiracy which is known by his name, though it might with far more justice be called by that of Madame de Chevreuse, since it was she who pulled the strings to which her luckless puppet of a lover danced to the scaffold. If it had succeeded, it would have changed the face of the realm ; but its complete failure, which placed all its leaders, with the exception of the fugitive Comte de Soissons, in the power of Richelieu, immensely strengthened the government which it had sought to overthrow. On September 2, the Maréchal d'Ornano anticipated the executioner by dying in prison,<sup>2</sup> and two and a half years later the Grand

gibbet, one of whom played the part of executioner, while the other served as his assistant. But the former was so unskilful that, besides two blows from a Swiss sword, which had been purchased on the spot, he gave him thirty-four with an adze such as carpenters use ; and was obliged to turn the body round to finish the severing of the neck, the patient exclaiming up to the twentieth blow : '*Jesus, Maria et Regina Cæli !*'"

<sup>1</sup> La Porte asserts that Madame de Chalais was actually present on the scaffold and, with superhuman fortitude, remained with her son until the end ; but, though the brave daughter of Blaise de Montluc would not have shrunk even from so terrible an ordeal as this, if she had believed it to be her duty, she feared that the sight of her would be too much for the condemned man, and that his emotion might be misinterpreted by the spectators. "Tell my son," said she to an archer of the Gardes du Corps, "that I am satisfied with the assurance that he gives me of dying at peace with God, and that, if I thought that the sight of me would not affect him too much, I would go to him and would not abandon him until his head was separated from his body ; but that, since I am unable to be of assistance to him, I go to pray for him." And, during the execution, she knelt in prayer before the altar of a neighbouring church.

<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that, had the marshal lived a little longer, he would have shared the fate of Chalais ; indeed, preparations were already being made to bring him to trial ; and the Cardinal was much mortified at losing the opportunity of making another example. "I am infinitely vexed that the death of the Maréchal d'Ornano has forestalled the judgment of the court," he wrote to the King. "The justice of God wished to anticipate yours."

Prior followed him to the grave.<sup>1</sup> The Duc de Vendôme remained in captivity until 1630, when he was set at liberty, though his government of Brittany, which had made him so great a power for mischief, was never restored to him.

As for *Monsieur*, he was discharged in order to marry Mlle. de Montpensier, who brought her husband a revenue of 350,000 livres and immense estates, among which was the sovereign principality of Dombes; and Richelieu, at the same time, gave him, as the price of his honour and the lives of his friends, a rich appanage. He exchanged the duchy of Anjou for those of Orléans and Chartres and the county of Blois, with a revenue of 100,000 livres and pensions amounting to more than six times that sum.<sup>2</sup> Little wonder, then, that he should have received the news of the unfortunate Chalais's end with equanimity!<sup>3</sup>

The brother was pardoned, but the wife had transgressed beyond forgiveness. The King, already violently irritated against the Queen by her coquetry with Buckingham, was exasperated beyond measure by the part which she was reported to have played in this miserable affair. His jealous and suspicious nature easily persuaded him that there was some intrigue between her and *Monsieur*, not perhaps to hasten his demise, but to marry whenever that event should take place; and such remained his

<sup>1</sup> The death of the Grand Prior and that of Ornano were by many ascribed to poison; but the Cardinal was not one of those cowardly tyrants who strike in the dark. He was too ready to destroy his enemies in public to need to have recourse to secret means.

<sup>2</sup> Enormous as was this revenue, the King was able to suppress it by a stroke of the pen on the slightest suspicion, and the Cardinal took care that *Monsieur* should not have in his hands a single fortified place. It was a wise precaution, since Gaston's first treason was to be succeeded by many others.

<sup>3</sup> *Monsieur* was playing cards when the news was brought to him. "He did not interrupt his game, but went on with it, as though, instead of Chalais's death, he had heard of his deliverance" (*Mémoires d'un Favori du duc d'Orléans*).

settled conviction until the end of his life. When he lay on his deathbed, Anne swore, with tears in her eyes, that she had been innocent of any such intention. "In the state in which I am," was the reply, "I am obliged to pardon you, but I am not obliged to believe you."

In the first transports of wrath, he summoned his consort to appear before a special council, at which Richelieu and the Queen-Mother assisted. Instead of being accommodated with the *fauteuil* due to her royalty, Anne suffered the indignity of having to sit upon a folding-seat, as though she had been a criminal, the while the King reproached her with having conspired against his life in order to have another husband. "The Queen," writes Madame de Motteville, "to whom innocence gave strength, incensed by the cruelty of this accusation, spoke with firmness and a generous boldness, and told him, as I have heard from her own lips, that she had too little to gain by the change to blacken her soul for so small a profit. Then, with the imperiousness of a princess of her birth, she reproached the Queen-Mother with the persecutions which she and the Cardinal de Richelieu were inflicting upon her."

Anne's boldness, and particularly the disdainful answer she had given him, served only to exasperate the King still further, and he resolved to punish her by a public humiliation. Accordingly, on August 27, an order was issued, signed by Louis and countersigned by the Cardinal, forbidding *entrée* to the Queen's apartments to all noblemen and gentlemen, other than those who were attached to her Household, unless they paid their respects to her Majesty in the King's presence and entered and quitted her apartments in his suite. He also forbade the Queen to grant any private audience without informing the Queen-Mother or the Cardinal, and naming the personage whom she proposed to receive and the object of the interview.

Madame de Chevreuse remained to be dealt with, and for a time it looked as though matters were likely to go hardly with her. After the denunciations of Chalais, the commission decided that she should be arrested and interrogated in regard to the charges which he had brought against her. A decree to that effect was actually drawn up and sent to Louis XIII. for his signature ; but the Duc de Chevreuse intervened, and, with great difficulty, persuaded the King, with whom, as we have said elsewhere, he was in high favour, to content himself with banishing her from Court, promising to be answerable for her future good conduct. On August 17, two days before her unhappy lover met his terrible fate on the Place du Bouffay, she left Nantes and retired to her husband's Château of Dampierre, near Rambouillet, where she was kept under close surveillance, all communication with the Queen being strictly forbidden her. Perhaps, she was so imprudent as to disobey the royal command ; but, any way, her hopes that the storm would soon pass, and that she would be allowed to enjoy once more the pleasures of Paris and the Court, were so far from being realised that, six months later, she received orders to leave France. Her request to be permitted to retire to England, where she was assured of a cordial welcome, was refused, and she was obliged to seek an asylum at Nancy, with her husband's kinsman, Charles IV. of Lorraine, whither she departed, vowing vengeance. "She was transported with fury," writes Richelieu, "and went so far as to declare that we knew her not when we concluded that she had only wit and coquetry ; that, in time, she would show us that she was good for something else ; that there was nothing that she would not suffer to be avenged ; and that she would rather surrender herself to a soldier of the Guards than fail to obtain satisfaction from her enemies." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*



## CHAPTER V

Charles IV., Duke of Lorraine—His appearance and character—His attentions to Madame de Chevreuse, who becomes his mistress—Buckingham endeavours to promote a European coalition against France—Relations between the Duke of Lorraine and France: aggressive policy of Richelieu—Madame de Chevreuse inflames the duke's resentment, and seeks to push him into the arms of England—Walter Montagu at Nancy—Was he the lover of Madame de Chevreuse?—Montagu and the duchess secure Charles IV.'s adhesion to the coalition—The English occupy the Île de Ré—The allies of England decline to take the field, and Buckingham is obliged to retire with terrible loss, leaving la Rochelle to its fate—Arrest of Walter Montagu on Lorraine territory—Futile protests of Charles IV.—Montagu brought to Paris and lodged in the Bastille—Alarm of Anne of Austria lest she should be compromised by the papers of the English agent—Her interview with La Porte—Montagu urges Louis XIII. to recall Madame de Chevreuse—Advice of Richelieu on the matter—The duchess is permitted to return to France and relegated to Dampierre.

**S**UCH was the frame of mind in which, towards the end of the autumn of 1626, Madame de Chevreuse arrived at Nancy, to seek an asylum from the young Sovereign of Lorraine, in whom she was to find an ally much more capable of aiding her in her schemes of revenge than a soldier of the Guards.

Charles IV., who had succeeded to the ducal throne of Lorraine in 1624, by virtue of the abdication of his father, François I., Comte de Vaudemont, brother of Duc Henri II., was at this time in his twenty-third year. In build he was extremely thin, but well proportioned, wiry, and muscular; his features were regular and very pleasing, and illuminated by a pair of piercing blue eyes; and, in contrast to the carelessness in his personal appearance

factor in that coalition which she was assisting to raise up against the King and the Minister who had dared to close the gates of France against her.

For, almost simultaneously with the disgrace of Madame de Chevreuse, England had broken with France. Irritated by the repeated refusals to receive him as Ambassador at the French Court, menaced in his position of Prime Minister by the hostility of the English Parliament, Buckingham had determined to endeavour to recover a little of his lost popularity at home by armed intervention in the war between Louis XIII. and his Protestant subjects, and by provoking a European coalition against France. Charles I. lent a willing ear to the counsels of his favourite; negotiations were opened with the Huguenot leaders, Rohan and Soubise, both near relatives of Madame de Chevreuse, and with the revolted Rochellois, and a great armament was fitted out, nominally, for service against the Algerine pirates, in reality, for a descent upon the western coast of France.

At the same time, Buckingham made overtures to Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, who, deeply aggrieved by the peace which France had concluded with Spain at Monzon, in the spring of 1626, cherished against Richelieu an implacable resentment; to the Emperor, who, he believed, might be willing to come to an arrangement with him over the affair of the Palatinate, in order to give him every facility to act against France; to Venice, and to Charles IV. of Lorraine. Upon the support of the last-named prince he counted with every confidence, for not only did he possess in Madame de Chevreuse an ambassador whose persuasions would be difficult to resist, but he was aware that Charles IV. was already very unfavourably disposed towards France.

Unhappily for himself and for his subjects, never had prince less comprehended his *rôle* than Charles IV. Placed

between the Houses of France and Austria, who were resuming the course, momentarily interrupted, of their old rivalry, Lorraine had at this time especial need of a pacific and prudent ruler, who would be content to preserve a conciliatory attitude towards both his powerful neighbours. But this Charles could never be brought to understand. From boyhood he had been tormented by ambition ; from boyhood he had dreamed of playing a great part, and of making for himself a name which should resound from one end of Europe to the other. "Enamoured of war," writes the Comte d'Haussonville, "he desired more than he feared a conflict from which he hoped to derive at once both renown and power. The exploits of a Wallenstein, the laurels of a Gustavus Adolphus, pleased him more than the peaceful sagacity of a Charles III. [of Lorraine]. Deluded by these chimeras, he compromised the very existence of his country, lost once his liberty, twice his crown, and obtained in return only an imperfect glory."

Since Charles IV. was disinclined to remain neutral in the quarrels between his two great neighbours, it was only natural that he should favour the Empire rather than France. It was in Germany, as a champion of the Empire, that he had made his first campaigns ; his uncle, the astute Maximilian of Bavaria, had enlisted his sympathies in the cause which he had himself embraced, and in that prince he had before his eyes a striking example of the advantages which a petty German Sovereign might derive from espousing the Imperial cause.

From France, on the other hand, now that Richelieu held the reins of government, he had little to hope and a good deal to fear, for the foreign policy pursued by the Cardinal, however much it might be to the advantage of his own country, was certainly not calculated to benefit the little States on the borders of the Empire, and



CHARLES IV, DUKE OF LORRAINE  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



had quickly established the most complete ascendancy, and she used it without scruple to fan the flame of his resentment, and to push him into the arms of England. To assist her in this task Buckingham despatched to Nancy several secondary agents, and, finally, an envoy of more importance, in the person of Walter Montagu, younger son of Henry Montagu, first Earl of Manchester, with full powers to conclude the affair.

Montagu, who in later years adopted the Catholic faith, entered the priesthood, and died abbot of Saint-Martin de Pontoise, was at this time still in the early twenties and a very sprightly young gentleman indeed ; and one of Charles IV.'s biographers, the Abbé Hugo, asserts that he was already "*éperdument amoureux*" of Madame de Chevreuse, whose acquaintance he had made during her sojourn in England, and that the lady was far from insensible to the passion which she had aroused in the bosom of the "milord." That Madame de Chevreuse had indulged in tender passages with Montagu while in England is far from improbable, but that she now divided her favours between him and the Duke of Lorraine, as the writer asks us to believe, seems very doubtful ; first, because, as even Retz admits, she was invariably faithful to the lover of the moment ; and secondly, because any suspicion of infidelity on her part would have excited the jealousy of Charles IV. and compromised the success of the negotiations which she was so anxious to see carried through.

Madame de Chevreuse and Montagu together triumphed over the last hesitations of the young prince, and secured his adhesion to the coalition. The plan of campaign was as follows :

The expedition which was being fitted out in the English harbours, and of which Buckingham himself was to take the command, was to disembark on the

Île de Ré and join the Protestants of La Rochelle ; the Duke of Savoy and the Comte de Soissons were to invade simultaneously Dauphiné and Provence ; the Duc de Rohan, at the head of the Huguenots of the Midi, was to raise Languedoc ; while Charles IV., with his own troops and those with which the Emperor might be willing to furnish him, marched on Paris by way of Champagne. It was hoped that, by the aid of so many diversions and under the combined attack of so many enemies, France would be crushed. "The Duke of Lorraine, young and ardent, vain and inexperienced, proposing to himself great conquests, received this overture with enthusiasm,"<sup>1</sup> and before Montagu quitted Nancy had definitely pledged himself to take vigorous action as soon as the English troops had landed on French soil.

No sooner had he entered into this engagement with England than, with the object of dissimulating his intentions until the moment for action should arrive, Charles IV. set off for Paris, accompanied by the Duc de Chevreuse, who had come to Nancy to visit his wife, and who had invited him to take up his quarters at his hôtel. Arrived in Paris, he had several interviews with Louis XIII. and the Cardinal, in which, after complaining of the conduct of Le Bret and the other French authorities in the Three Bishoprics, he assured the King that it was his ardent desire to be regarded by him as "a good servant<sup>2</sup> and a good neighbour." Then he returned to Lorraine under the pleasing illusion that he had effectually dissipated any suspicions which the French Government might have entertained as to his real designs.

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> As Dukes of Bar, the Dukes of Lorraine were vassals of the King of France, and were supposed to do homage for that fief—a duty which they sometimes endeavoured to evade.

This journey, which had doubtless been undertaken on the advice of Madame de Chevreuse, who had removed to Bar-le-Duc, lest her continued sojourn at Nancy might give umbrage to France, failed of its purpose, for neither Louis XIII. nor Richelieu were in the least deceived by the protestations of the Duc of Lorraine. The Cardinal had his spies everywhere, even in the ducal palace itself, and was well aware of the visit of Montagu and of the agents who had preceded him. In fact, so perfect was his system of espionage that Charles could not reinforce a garrison, move a battalion, or despatch a courier without his being immediately apprised of it.

On July 12, 1727, the English expedition sailed from Portsmouth, and, a few days later, appeared off La Rochelle. But the inhabitants, who had received no intimation of its approach, refused to admit the English, on the plea that, "being in strict union with all the Protestants of France, they could not receive into their city the proffered succour without consulting their friends and obtaining their consent."

Upon receiving this refusal, Buckingham determined to secure a basis of operations by conquering the Île de Ré, the most northerly of the two islands which lie outside the harbour of La Rochelle, and on July 20 he effected his landing, after a sharp brush with the enemy. The open country was easily mastered, but the Marquis de Tocrai, the governor of the island, retired to the fortress of Saint-Martin, where he held out with the utmost resolution.

According to the plan of campaign which had been agreed upon, the allies of England should have put their troops in motion as soon as Buckingham had landed upon French soil. But, though Rohan, rather tardily, it is true, assembled a small army in Languedoc, the Duke of Savoy and the Comte de Soissons refused to do anything until



Saint-Martin had fallen ; and, impatient as he was for war, Charles IV. was forced to recognise the futility of commencing hostilities until they were ready to support him. This inaction left Richelieu free to concentrate his energies upon repulsing the English invaders ; reinforcements were poured into the Île de Ré, the blockade of Saint-Martin forced, and, after an ineffectual attempt to carry the place by assault, the expeditionary force was compelled to evacuate the island, losing more than twelve hundred men in effecting its retreat to the fleet. On November 17, Buckingham, with the remnant of his ill-fated army, sailed for England, leaving La Rochelle to endure one of the longest and most terrible sieges which history records. "Since England was England," wrote Strafford bitterly, "it never received so dishonourable a blow."

Meanwhile, Montagu was at Turin, vainly endeavouring to persuade Charles Emmanuel to take action. Towards the middle of November, he quitted Piedmont for Nancy, carrying with him despatches of an extremely important nature ; but he was fated never to reach his destination.

For some time, Richelieu had been very anxious to lay this enterprising young gentleman by the heels, being of opinion that, if this could be accomplished, "the King would discover many things that were suspected, and of which it was important to have a fuller knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Since, however, in all his journeys, Montagu carefully avoided setting foot on French soil, it was impossible to effect his apprehension without offending some foreign prince ; and this the Cardinal was naturally reluctant to do. At length, however, being convinced that Charles IV. entertained hostile intentions towards France, and that "it was only the power, and not the ill-will, which failed him,"<sup>2</sup> he resolved to have Montagu seized on Lorraine

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

territory, and selected for this purpose the Marquis de Bourbonne, a nobleman whose estates were situated on the frontier of the duchy, and who possessed an intimate knowledge of the country.

Bourbonne, having accepted the commission, sent several of his people to Switzerland, through which he knew the English agent was to pass, with orders to keep him under close observation and give their master timely warning of his approach. He himself, with a troop of light cavalry, took post at a point some three leagues on the Lorraine side of the frontier, and here he successfully ambushed the unsuspecting Montagu, and carried him and his despatches to his Château of Coiffy.

The perusal of these interesting documents furnished Richelieu with all the information that he could desire about the projects of his enemies, and revealed to him, not only the secret understandings between the Emperor, the Duke of Savoy, England, and Charles IV. of Lorraine, but the treachery of Spain, which, notwithstanding that she had engaged to assist France against the Huguenots of La Rochelle, was working to create a dangerous diversion on the side of Germany.

Great was the indignation and alarm at the little Court of Lorraine when the news arrived of the arrest of Montagu. Charles IV. swore and blustered and despatched more than one envoy to Paris to demand the immediate release of the prisoner, and, in case of refusal, to inform the French Court that their master "would spare none of the legitimate means which justice permitted to obtain satisfaction for the insult which had been offered to his person." Marie de' Medici, who, in the absence of the King and the Cardinal at the seat of war, now exercised supreme authority in the capital, received them very courteously, but excused herself from complying

with their demand until she had first consulted her son ; and, on learning from Bourbonne that the Duke of Lorraine was threatening to rescue Montagu by force from the Château of Coiffy, she sent a strong body of cavalry to bring the English agent to Paris, where he was lodged in the Bastille.

It is not improbable that the removal of Montagu to Paris might have been followed by a declaration of war on the part of the Duke of Lorraine and the advance of his troops into Champagne, but hard upon it came the news of the total failure of Buckingham's enterprise and the retreat of the English from the Île de Ré. The repulse of his allies caused Charles IV. to moderate the tone of his demands, and the Prince de Phalsbourg, whom he now despatched to Paris, contented himself by representing to the French Government the mortification which they were inflicting on his Sovereign by retaining in captivity a foreign agent arrested in his dominions, in violation of his most obvious rights. To which the Queen-Mother replied, by order of the King, that, though they could have desired that Montagu had been arrested elsewhere than in Lorraine, she had no reason to suppose that the King wished to set at liberty a man who, for four months past, had been engaged in devising and practising machinations against his State. Montagu accordingly remained in the Bastille.

The Duke of Lorraine and his confederates were not the only persons who were thrown into consternation by the arrest of Montagu. Anne of Austria, it appears, had been informed by Madame de Chevreuse, who contrived to maintain a secret correspondence with her, of the coalition which was forming against her adopted country, and, bitterly incensed as she was by the humiliating position which she now occupied, had been so imprudent as to associate herself in the intrigues of the duchess, though

to what extent is unknown. When informed of the English agent's arrest, the Queen was supping *au grand couvert*. She turned deadly pale, pushed away the dishes as they were presented to her, or merely tasted them, and as quickly as possible retired to her own apartments and took refuge in her oratory, where, we are assured, she spent the whole of that night and a part of the following day dissolved in tears. Her agitation was not diminished by the arrival of a letter from Madame de Chevreuse, warning her of the arrest of Montagu, but professing entire ignorance as to the nature of the papers of which he was the bearer. Both the Queen and the duchess were well aware that, if Anne were named in them, she would be irretrievably ruined.

A few days later, the Queen ascertained that Montagu was to be transferred from the Château of Coiffy to the Bastille, and that among the troops selected to escort him thither was a company of gendarmes into which she remembered that her faithful *valet de chambre*, La Porte, had been drafted after the King had compelled her to dismiss him from her service. She immediately sent for a M. Levau, who was an intimate friend of La Porte and the father of one of her own waiting-women, and instructed him to find the *ex-valet de chambre* and bring him to her apartments, as she desired his services in a matter of the most urgent importance. But let us allow La Porte to relate what followed in his own words:

“The news of the arrest of mylord Montaigu (*sic*) threw the Queen into extreme anguish, for she dreaded lest she should be named in mylord's papers, and that, if this came to be discovered by the King, with whom she was not on too good terms, he would maltreat her and send her back to Spain, as he would assuredly have done. This fear occasioned her so much disquietude that she could neither eat nor sleep. She was in this

predicament when she remembered that I was in the company of gendarmes which was among the troops detailed for the escort of mylord. She therefore inquired of Levau where I was ; he found me and conducted me, after midnight, to the Queen's chamber, from which every one had retired. She explained to me the difficulty in which she was situated, and told me that, since she had no one whom she could trust, she had sent for me, believing that I should serve her with fidelity and devotion. She said that on the report that I was to bring her depended her safety or her ruin. Then she explained the whole affair to me, and told me that, when we were escorting mylord Montaigu (*sic*), I must find an occasion to speak to him and to ascertain whether, in the papers that had been taken from him, the Queen's name was mentioned. Also I was to entreat him that, if it should happen, when he was in the Bastille, that he should be interrogated and pressed to name those whom he knew to be accomplices of this league, to be very careful not to name her. I acquainted mylord Montaigu with the distress of the Queen. He replied that she was not named, either directly or indirectly, in the papers that had been taken from him, and assured me that, if he were interrogated, he would rather die than say anything that might injure her. When I reported this answer to the Queen, she trembled with joy."

Anne escaped on this occasion with no worse punishment than a very bad fright ; but it did not serve to make her more prudent.

Montagu was certainly a very gallant gentleman, for, not only did he maintain silence concerning the Queen, but he showed himself as solicitous for the interests of Madame de Chevreuse as for those of the King, his master. When, towards the end of February, Louis XIII., quitting momentarily the siege of La Rochelle, returned

to Paris, he demanded and obtained an audience, in which he sought to persuade his Majesty that the present war with England was a misunderstanding, arising out of the refusal to receive Buckingham at the Court of France and the severity which had been used towards Madame de Chevreuse. (Most people, we are inclined to think, will be of opinion that the lady had been treated with extreme indulgence.) He assured the King that she was "a princess beloved in England," towards whom his master entertained "a peculiar affection," and that he would certainly wish her to be included in the peace, "if it were not shameful to make mention of a woman." Finally, he expressed the hope that his Majesty would not continue to visit the duchess with his displeasure, warning him that she was a woman of great intelligence, who well knew how to make use of the power of her charms, and that no disgrace could weaken her resolution.

Louis XIII., not a little impressed by Montagu's arguments, resolved to consult Richelieu, and despatched a courier to La Rochelle, requesting his Eminence to give him his advice on the matter. The Cardinal tells us that he hesitated a good deal about the return of Madame de Chevreuse, "who, having done much evil in the past, might do still more in the future, and, by the same reasoning, might be able to do some good and be of use to the service of the King."<sup>1</sup> At length, after much reflection, he decided to take the risk, and wrote to Louis XIII. that "it was difficult and beyond hope that this lady could ever do good, being of so evil a disposition; still, as the malignant planets augmented their malignity when they were in a habitation which they disliked, and, on the contrary, their aspects softened when they were in a place which pleased them, perhaps she would relax something of the malignity of her mind, if

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*.

she were withdrawn from this exile ; joined to which it was advisable to make some concession to the urgent entreaties of her husband.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he advised the King to set Montagu at liberty without any conditions, and to take no steps against the Duke of Lorraine, who, he hoped, would repent of his foolish enterprise and recognise the futility of attempting anything against France.

And so Montagu was conducted to the Lorraine frontier, and there released ; and Charles IV. and Madame de Chevreuse journeyed to Paris to thank the King for his clemency, and rivalled one another in protestations of gratitude and promises of devotion, which neither of them had the smallest intention of keeping. Then the Duke returned to Nancy, while Madame de Chevreuse set out for Dampierre, to which Louis XIII. had ordered her to retire. Here she learned, a few months later, of the assassination of Buckingham by Felton, followed in rapid succession by the fall of La Rochelle, the triumphant campaign amid the Alpine snows by which, almost without a blow, Richelieu reasserted the position of France in Italy, the peace with England, and the reduction of the Huguenots of the South. Thus, all her hopes seemed shattered, and, like the conspiracy of Chalais, the only result of the coalition which she had assisted to form was to leave her enemy more powerful than ever.

Nevertheless, she refused to despair, confident that, however long it might be delayed, the day of reckoning would surely arrive.

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*.

## CHAPTER VI

Madame de Chevreuse resumes her intrigues against Richelieu—Anxiety of the Cardinal for the friendship of the duchess—Châteauneuf, the Keeper of the Seals, becomes the lover of Madame de Chevreuse, and is persuaded by her to engage in a conspiracy with Queen Henriette Marie and her friends in England—The Chevalier de Jars in London—Richelieu becomes suspicious of the loyalty of Châteauneuf—The Cardinal falls dangerously ill at Bordeaux, and his life is despaired of—Joy of Anne of Austria and her friends—Conduct of Châteauneuf—An intercepted letter—Return of the Cardinal to Paris—Evidence against Châteauneuf accumulating—The French Ambassador in London enlists the services of a professional burglar to get possession of the correspondence of the Chevalier de Jars—Arrest of Châteauneuf—Over fifty letters from Madame de Chevreuse found among his papers—Indignation of Richelieu—Madame de Chevreuse ordered to retire to Dampierre—Fate of her accomplices—Courage of the Chevalier de Jars—He is condemned to death, but is reprieved when actually upon the scaffold—Madame de Chevreuse visits Paris in disguise—She is exiled to Tours.

THE return of Madame de Chevreuse to France was followed by a few years of comparative repose in her troublous life, for, though she was probably no stranger to the intrigues against Richelieu, she was prudent enough to see that, for some time at any rate, she would be kept under such rigorous surveillance that it would be highly dangerous for her to take any active part in them. And so she escaped the fate which befell so many of her friends after "The Day of Dupes"; and Marie de' Medici had fled to Brussels, Gaston had vainly raised the standard of revolt, and Charles IV. had paid for his support of that worthless prince with the cession of a part of his dominions, and Montmorency



with his head, before she again decided to enter the lists against the all-conquering Minister.

This time she had less excuse than ever for her conduct, since the Cardinal certainly had treated her with remarkable indulgence, and now showed himself sincerely anxious for her friendship. Some writers assure us that he was anxious for something more than friendship, and even Victor Cousin seems to be of this opinion. It would appear more probable, however, that it was the lady's abilities and the courage and obstinacy which she had displayed in combating him, rather than her personal charms, which appealed to Richelieu, and that the homage which he undoubtedly paid her at this period ought to be regarded as rendered rather to a politician whom he wished to propitiate than to a beauty whose heart he desired to win. But, whatever may have been the object of these attentions, they were not accepted, for Madame de Chevreuse preferred to bestow both her friendship and her affection upon a *protégé* of the Cardinal—the one upon whose loyalty he had the most right to count, and whom, by a single glance from her bright eyes, she subjugated completely and enrolled in the ranks of the malcontents.

The *protégé* in question was Charles de l'Aubespine, Marquis de Châteauneuf, a member of an old family of magistrates and statesmen, who, on the dismissal of Michel de Marillac, in 1630, had received the post of Keeper of the Seals. He was an exceedingly able man, and had served the Cardinal with sagacity and fidelity ; indeed, he had carried his devotion so far as to preside over the commission which had condemned the unfortunate Montmorency to a traitor's death, and thus incurred the hatred of the powerful families with which the deceased nobleman had been connected. In return for the services which he had rendered his patron,

Châteauneuf had been overwhelmed with benefits. Richelieu had procured for him not only the Seals, but the posts of Chancellor of the Orders of the King and Governor of Touraine, and, in a single year, *gratifications* to the amount of 100,000 crowns; and nothing was farther from his thoughts than that this man whom he had raised so high would be prepared to betray him. But he had failed to take into consideration the power of love.

Châteauneuf was already on the shady side of fifty, but, "although grave and a great statesman, he had always loved the ladies";<sup>1</sup> and when Madame de Chevreuse condescended to smile upon him, he surrendered incontinently and "conceived for her one of those fatal passions which precede and mark the last flight of youth."<sup>2</sup> To love this dangerous siren was blindly to obey her behests, even at the risk of fortune, liberty, and life itself; and soon the Keeper of the Seals found himself engaged in a conspiracy of so rash a nature that it is difficult to understand how a man of his undoubted capacity could have lent himself to it.

The latest project of the Cardinal's enemies was to induce Charles I. of England to come forward as the champion of his mother-in-law, Marie de' Medici. This his Majesty had up to the present shown no inclination to do, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of Henriette Marie. But it was believed that, if the Lord Treasurer, Weston, soon to become Earl of Portland, who was regarded as the principal obstacle to the interference of England in French affairs, could be got rid of and replaced by one of the Queen's friends, Charles might be persuaded to offer the Queen-Mother an asylum and take energetic action for her restoration, and that, rather than risk a fresh rupture with England, Louis XIII.

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Cousin, *Madame de Chevreuse*.

would consent to sacrifice his Minister on the altar of filial duty.

They accordingly entered into close relations with Henriette Marie and her friends in England—Holland, Montagu, Goring, and others—to facilitate which Châteauneuf sent to London the Chevalier de Jars, a cadet of the House of Rochecouart, who, some years before, at the time of the Buckingham scandal, had been employed by Anne of Austria as the intermediary between her and Madame de Chevreuse, and who had been banished from France after the "Day of Dupes."

It was a dangerous game to play, entailing as it did an immense amount of correspondence between the two Courts, some of which might easily fall into unauthorised hands, and the utmost discretion on the part of the principals; and, though Jars posed in England as a casual visitor, played tennis with the King, chatted with the Queen, and appeared to have no thought beyond amusement, he did not succeed in deceiving the French Ambassador, Fontenay-Mareuil, who knew him as a gentleman with a pronounced taste for intrigue and had his suspicions about him from the first.

Meanwhile, in France, Richelieu was beginning to entertain serious doubts as to the loyalty of Châteauneuf. He learned that he was very assiduous in his attentions to the Queen and sometimes remained in her apartments until a late hour, and that he was continually visiting Madame de Chevreuse. But, since the latter lady, in order the better to conceal her designs, had become very gracious indeed towards his Eminence and appeared entirely to have forgotten their former enmity, he was inclined to believe that the connexion between her and the Keeper of the Seals might be merely a sentimental one, and therefore refrained from taking any steps against Châteauneuf until he was in possession of more tangible proofs.

At the beginning of November 1632, Richelieu fell dangerously ill at Bordeaux, where the Court then was, and so serious did his condition become that his life was soon despaired of. Louis XIII. had left for Paris at the end of October, but the Queen and the Court had remained with the Minister, and, as the latter grew worse, she and her friends made no attempt to conceal their joy at the prospect of their speedy deliverance from the iron hand which had weighed so heavily upon them. Not for many a long day had Anne shown herself so gay ; instead of countermanding the fêtes that had been arranged, she multiplied them, and at the very crisis of the Cardinal's illness gave a grand ball, which Châteauneuf, confident that the sick man's hours were numbered, was so ill-advised as to attend.

The Cardinal did not die, however ! . . . The mighty soul, so to speak, forced the feeble body to live, and from the very brink of the grave he returned, more terrible than ever, to crush the imprudent intriguers who had dared to exult over his sufferings. Great was his wrath to learn that, while he had been struggling with death, the man who owed everything to him, who had professed for him such immeasurable devotion, had been dancing gaily at a ball.

But it was as nothing to what he felt, when, shortly afterwards, one of his spies contrived to lay his hands on a letter written about the same time by Châteauneuf to Madame de Chevreuse, in which the Keeper of the Seals gloated, in terms too coarse for reproduction, over the condition of his benefactor and ridiculed him as a man already dead.

Certain writers pretend that this letter was the immediate cause of the arrest of Châteauneuf ; but, though we can well believe that from that moment the exasperated Cardinal was firmly resolved on the ruin of his ungrateful

*protégé*, this event did not take place until the end of the following February, by which time much more damning evidence of his treason had come into Richelieu's possession.

When the Cardinal was sufficiently recovered to travel, he journeyed slowly northwards to Brouage, and thence to the Château of Rochefort, near Étampes, where, in the first days of January 1633, he was joined by Louis XIII. The King embraced his Minister, and told him that "it gave him as much joy to see him again in good health as his enemies had shown on receiving the false report of his death,"<sup>1</sup> referring to the *feux de joie* by which Marie de' Medici, *Monsieur*, and the French refugees in Brussels had celebrated the supposed demise of their enemy. Shortly afterwards, King and Cardinal returned together to the capital, where Châteauneuf, who had followed the Queen to Paris, came to wait upon his Majesty. He met with so frigid a reception that every one remarked upon it, and assumed that his disgrace was only a question of days.

To the general surprise, however, several weeks passed without the expected blow descending; and Châteauneuf began to flatter himself that the attitude of the King was due mainly to his indiscretion in attending the Queen's ball at Bordeaux, and that the excuses for his conduct which he had not failed to offer had satisfied both his Majesty and the Cardinal. In this he was entirely deceived, since Richelieu was merely holding his hand until he should have sufficient evidence of Châteauneuf's treachery to justify, not only his disgrace, but his arrest, and enable him to strike an overwhelming blow at the conspiracy with which the Keeper of the Seals had been so foolish as to associate himself. Nor had he any difficulty in obtaining it.

<sup>1</sup> Père Griffet, *Histoire de Louis XIII.*

A curious document entitled *Mémoire de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu contre M. de Châteauneuf*, published, for the first time, by Victor Cousin in his monograph on Madame de Chevreuse, tells us that "Ouaston (*sic*) Grand Treasurer of England, caused the Cardinal to be warned, by his own son [Jerome Weston], Ambassador Extraordinary in France, that he possessed positive proof that the Sieur de Châteauneuf designed to ruin the Cardinal, and that the Queen of England had said, on several occasions, that the Keeper of the Seals did not share the evil counsels of the Cardinal, that he was her particular servant, and that he would guide the State better than the Cardinal, when the latter should be dead."

Soon afterwards, Fontenay-Mareuil addressed a long despatch to Louis XIII., to the effect that he had received a visit from Weston, who had informed him that the Queen of England and her partisans were directing all their efforts to ruin the Cardinal and replace him by the Keeper of the Seals, "who appeared to possess all their confidence," and that they were moving Heaven and earth to get Lord Holland sent as Ambassador to France, in order that he might use that position to cabal against the Government.

More circumstantial evidence against Châteauneuf was secured in a singular manner. Fontenay-Mareuil, being convinced that the Chevalier de Jars was a secret agent of Châteauneuf, and that it was through him that the Keeper of the Seals communicated with his English friends, had him very closely watched, and, having ascertained that he was in the habit of keeping his correspondence in a certain cabinet, engaged the services of a professional housebreaker, who, one fine night, effected an entrance into the chevalier's lodgings, carried off the cabinet and its contents, and placed them in the hands of the French Ambassador.

Being now in possession of abundant proofs of his *protégé's* guilt, Richelieu hesitated no longer. At eight o'clock in the evening of February 25, 1633, the Court being then at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Sieur de la Vrillière, one of the Secretaries of State, accompanied by Gordes, captain of the Gardes du Corps, entered Châteauneuf's apartments. La Vrillière handed him an order from the King, directing him to surrender the Seals and all his papers, after which Gordes stepped forward and informed the disgraced Minister that he had received his Majesty's orders to have him conducted to his Château of Ruffec, in the Limousin. Châteauneuf begged La Vrillière to obtain the King's permission for him to retire to the estate in Berry from which he took his title. Louis XIII., however, refused, or rather ignored, this request, and Châteauneuf was obliged to take the road to Ruffec, escorted by a detachment of light cavalry, under the command of Lamont, an officer of the Garde Écossaise. On the way, they were overtaken by a courier, with orders for Lamont to conduct his prisoner, not to Ruffec, but to the Château of Angoulême, where the ex-Keeper of the Seals was placed in close confinement.<sup>1</sup>

A commission composed of Richelieu's devoted adherents, Léon Bouthillier and his son Claude—afterwards so well known under the name of Chavigny—and Claude de Bullion, was appointed to sort and analyse the papers of Châteauneuf, for the subsequent perusal of the Cardinal. These papers, which filled several large coffers, proved a rich spoil, and included letters from Madame de Chevreuse, the Chevalier de Jars, Walter Montagu, *Monsieur's* favourite Puylaurens, the Comte de Brion, the Duc de Vendôme, and even from the Queen of England herself. There were, however, none from Anne of Austria, who, for once in a way, appears to have exercised a commendable discretion.

<sup>1</sup> Père Griffet, *Histoire de Louis XIII.*

The letters of Madame de Chevreuse were over fifty in number, written partly in cipher, the key to which, however, was found in an ebony cabinet, which had been searched on the supposition that it might contain important papers. They furnished highly interesting and piquant reading, revealing, as they did—even allowing for some exaggeration into which the writer's vanity, or her desire to embitter Châteauneuf against the Cardinal, may have tempted her—that Richelieu had professed great devotion for the duchess and great jealousy of the Keeper of the Seals, and had used every persuasion to induce her to renounce her lover. This, however, she assures the latter, no consideration will persuade her to do. She despises the favour of the Cardinal ; she does not fear his power ; she detests his person, and has as much contempt for him as she has affection for Châteauneuf. We also learn that a gentleman, whom she indicates by the figure 37, and who is believed to have been the Comte de Brion, was persecuting her with his attentions, to her great embarrassment, as she did not desire any save those of Châteauneuf, and knew that they were most displeasing to the Cardinal, whom she was anxious not to offend :

“ Madame de Chevreuse complains to M. de Châteauneuf of her servant, who has so little confidence in the generosity and affection of his master, and behaves much worse, when he asks Madame de Chevreuse if she neglects him because she has promised the Cardinal to do so. You were wrong to have cherished this thought, and the soul of Madame de Chevreuse is too noble for base sentiments ever to enter therein. That is why I take no more account of the favour of the Cardinal than his power, and I shall never do anything unworthy of myself, either because of the benefits that I might derive from the one, or because of the harm that I might suffer from



the other. Believe that, if you wish to do me justice, I shall render it you all my life, and desire you to take advantage of it, for I shall take great pleasure in satisfying you and great pain in displeasing you. These, conscientiously, are my sentiments, and you have none of them, if you ever fail your master.

“ . . . To-morrow, I am to see him [the Cardinal] at two o'clock. I shall write and tell you all that happens. Be assured that Madame de Chevreuse will be no longer in the world when she is no longer yours.

“ . . . I believe that I am destined to become the object of the folly of madmen. The Cardinal certainly proves it to me ; but whatever embarrassment his ill-humour occasions me, I am less distressed by it than by that of 37, who, without being hindered by my entreaties or by the considerations which I have represented to him, wishes to go wherever Madame de Chevreuse may be, and declares that nothing shall prevent him, although Madame de Chevreuse does not wish it, from fear of offending the Cardinal, if he should discover it. I confess to you that 37's talk has much distressed me, for I know not how to suffer it. I am very grieved that 37 has given me so many reasons to be annoyed with him, after having given me so much cause to praise him. I am determined not to see him, if he comes without my permission, and not even to receive his letters, if he does not repent of the manner in which he addresses Madame de Chevreuse, who is unable to tolerate such language from any person in the world but you.

“ I have had no news lately of the Cardinal. If he is as glad not to hear of me as I am not to hear about him, he is very contented, and I free from a persecution from which time and our own good sense will deliver us.

“ . . . The tyranny of the Cardinal increases every

moment. He storms and raves, because I do not go to see him. I have written to him twice compliments of which he is unworthy—a thing I should never have done but for the way in which I was pestered by M. de Chevreuse, who told me that it was the way to buy peace. I believe that the favour of the King has raised his presumption to a pitch which cannot be surpassed. He imagines that he will frighten Madame de Chevreuse by his anger, and is persuaded, in my opinion, that there is nothing that she will not do to appease him. But she prefers to perish rather than make submission to the Cardinal. His pride is intolerable to me. He told my husband that my humour was unbearable to a sensitive person like himself, and that he had resolved not to pay me any particular attention, since I was incapable of conferring upon him alone my friendship and confidence. I wish no one but you to know this. Do not allow M. de Chevreuse to suspect that you are aware of it. He has had a little quarrel with me, because he was so intimidated by the insolence of the Cardinal that he wished to persecute me into basely enduring it. I entertain so high an opinion of your courage and affection that I wish you to know everything that concerns Madame de Chevreuse. She trusts you so entirely that she deems her interests as safe in your hands as in her own. Love your master [Madame de Chevreuse] faithfully, and believe that, whatever persecution may befall him, he will, by all his actions, ever show himself worthy of it.

“ . . . I am in despair over what the Cardinal has written to Madame de Chevreuse this evening. He has sent her a letter by express, to implore her to grant him two things: the first not to speak to M. de Brion ; the second, not to admit M. de Châteauneuf. The latter is the cause of my distress. However, my determination to prove my affection for M. de Châteauneuf is stronger than any

consideration for the Cardinal. That is why I have written to the Cardinal that I cannot excuse myself from complying with M. de Chevreuse's request to see M. de Châteauneuf, in connexion with the many affairs which he has in hand. The most important that I have, is to acquit the obligations which I am under to M. de Châteauneuf, to whom I am truly more than every one in the world.

"There is no diversion or weariness that can prevent my thinking of you and of giving you proofs of it. These three lines are a proof of this fact, and I wish them to serve as an assurance of another, which is that, if M. de Châteauneuf is as perfect a servant in deeds as he is in words, Madame de Chevreuse will be a more grateful master in action than in speech.

"The Cardinal is unable to endure Madame de Chevreuse esteeming M. de Châteauneuf, and knows not how to prevent it. Adieu, I must see you at any cost. Send me an answer and beware of the Cardinal, for he spies upon Madame de Chevreuse, and M. de Châteauneuf.

". . . Although I am unwell, I am unwilling to stop without telling you how the visit of Madame de Chevreuse to the Cardinal passed off. He spoke to her of his passion, which he said had reached such a point as to be the cause of his illness, owing to his vexation at the behaviour of Madame de Chevreuse towards him. He complained at great length of the conduct of Madame de Chevreuse, particularly in regard to M. de Châteauneuf, and concluded by declaring that he had no desire to live longer tormented by the sentiments that he cherished for Madame de Chevreuse, unless she showed that those that she entertained for him were different from what they had been in the past. To which Madame de Chevreuse replied that she had always endeavoured to give the

Cardinal reason to be satisfied with her, and that she wished to give it more than ever. The Cardinal pressed her most urgently to tell him on what footing M. de Châteauneuf stood with her, observing that every one believed him to be on the most intimate terms, which I absolutely denied. I do not wish to say more to you at present, but believe that I esteem you as much as I despise him, and that I shall never have any secret from M. de Châteauneuf, nor any confidence in the Cardinal.

“ . . . I believe M. de Châteauneuf to be faithful and devoted to me, and I shall be all my life the same to him, provided that, as he has deserved that I should form this high opinion of him, he does render himself worthy of my losing it. I am in despair at being unable to send you to-day the painting of Madame de Chevreuse that I promised you.

“ . . . I counsel you, being unable to say that I command you, and being unwilling to say more than I beg you, to wear the diamond that I am sending you, so that when you behold this stone—which has two qualities : the first, of being firm ; the second, of being so brilliant that it is visible from afar and causes the least defects to be seen—you may remember that you must be firm in your promises, in order to please me, and not commit faults so that I may remark them.

“ . . . The Cardinal is better disposed towards Madame de Chevreuse than he has been since his return. He wrote to her this evening that he was extremely distressed by my illness ; that all the favours of the King gave him no pleasure in the condition in which I was, and that the gaiety which M. de Châteauneuf had shown to-day had caused him to alter his opinion that he loves Madame de Chevreuse, and that if Madame de Chevreuse had witnessed his demeanour, she would judge him to be either the most dissembling or the least affectionate man

in the world, and that she would be obliged never to love or to trust him any more. As to that, Madame de Chevreuse promises M. de Châteauneuf that, as she does not allow herself to be guided by the opinion of the Cardinal, she will do both, and will love and trust him always.

" . . . Yesterday, at six o'clock in the evening, the Cardinal de la Valette came to see Madame de Chevreuse on behalf of the Cardinal de Richelieu. He spoke to her sadly and submissively in favour of his master. Then he expressed great admiration for Madame de Chevreuse, and proceeded to pay her a thousand of what he considers compliments, but I myself nonsense. I responded very courteously and coldly. 37 is in despair. He says that he wishes to die, since Madame de Chevreuse refuses to see him ; that his whole life will be a burden to him, never having cherished it save in the belief that it might one day be agreeable and useful to Madame de Chevreuse ; that, now that he has lost hope, he has lost the desire to live, and that this would be the last time he should ever trouble me. I hope that your affection is proof against everything. I ask of you this favour and promise you that, so long as Madame de Chevreuse lives, you shall receive it from her. This letter was written yesterday. Since then, the Cardinal de la Valette has written me a thousand compliments on behalf of the Cardinal de Richelieu. . . ."

These final proofs of the way in which he had been tricked by a woman and betrayed by a friend greatly enraged the Cardinal. Nevertheless, in the faint hope that Madame de Chevreuse might yet be persuaded of the error of her ways, he again treated her with singular indulgence, and the only punishment she received was an order to retire to the picturesque solitude of Dampierre. He, however, made ample amends for his leniency to-

wards the duchess by the severity with which he treated her lover, who paid for his infatuation for Madame de Chevreuse by an imprisonment which lasted ten years and was only terminated by Richelieu's death.

Rigorous punishment was also meted out to such of their accomplices as the Cardinal was able to lay hands upon ; and though Châteauneuf's brother, the Marquis d'Hauterive, having received timely warning of the arrest of the Keeper of the Seals, succeeded in effecting his escape and took refuge in Holland, his nephew, the Marquis de Leuville, was less fortunate, and remained for some years in the Bastille.

The same fortress opened its gates to receive the enterprising Chevalier de Jars, who had been so imprudent as to avail himself of the permission lately accorded him to return to France. The Cardinal was particularly anxious to get hold of Jars, since he believed that he might be induced to reveal the part which Anne of Austria had played in the conspiracy. But the chevalier, if a foolhardy, was a brave and honourable, man, and, though he was kept in close confinement for nearly a year and subjected to repeated examinations by his Eminence's myrmidons, he steadfastly refused to make the least admission that might incriminate the Queen or any of his friends. Finally, he was transferred to Troyes, and there brought to trial for high treason before a special commission, at the head of which was the notorious Laffemas, who was known as "the Cardinal's executioner," and made it his boast that he could condemn any man if he had but two lines of his writing. Laffemas bullied and browbeat the prisoner and "did all the mean things that the basest soul is capable of suggesting" ;<sup>1</sup> but to no purpose, for he could wring nothing from him. Accordingly, the judges proceeded to pass sentence of

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

death, and Jars was in due course conducted to the scaffold, "where he made his appearance with a demeanour full of courage, smiling at his enemies and prepared to meet death without flinching."<sup>1</sup> But it was only a grim farce after all, for the Cardinal had nothing to gain by the removal of such small fry as the chevalier, and the only object of the trial had been to intimidate him into betraying his accomplices. And so, at the moment the condemned man was about to lay his head on the block, Laffemas interrupted the proceedings, by producing an order from the King remitting the capital sentence and directing that the chevalier should be conducted back to the Bastille.

Madame de Chevreuse was not permitted to remain long at Dampierre. Far from being grateful for the indulgence extended to her, she hastened to take advantage of it, and, though all communication with the Queen had been strictly forbidden her, immediately embarked upon a secret but active correspondence with her royal friend. Soon, learning that Anne was most anxious to consult her personally, she grew more enterprising, and, on more than one occasion, when the shades of night were falling, she quitted the château in disguise, made her way to Paris, was introduced into the Louvre or the Couvent du Val-de-Grâce, whither the Queen was frequently in the habit of retiring, had an interview with her Majesty, and, ere morning dawned, was back at Dampierre.

But Richelieu's spies were on the alert, and ere long rumours of these surreptitious visits reached the ears of the Cardinal. And so, one day, a coach, escorted by a detachment of Musketeers, drove into the courtyard of the Château of Dampierre, and the officer in command informed Madame de Chevreuse that he had orders to conduct her to the Château of Milly, near Tours, a property which had been bequeathed her by her first husband.

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

## CHAPTER VII

Madame de Chevreuse in Touraine—An amorous archbishop—Visits of La Rochefoucauld—The duchess devises fresh schemes for the overthrow of the Cardinal, into which the imprudent Queen allows herself to be drawn—The affair of the Val-de-Grâce—Alarm of the Queen—She takes the most solemn oaths that she has never written to any foreign Power—But subsequently makes a partial confession to Richelieu, on an assurance of receiving the King's pardon—The Queen desires to communicate with La Porte in the Bastille, in order that his admissions may tally with her own—Her maid-of-honour, Mlle. de Hautefort, volunteers to go in disguise to the Bastille with a letter—Romantic manner in which communication is established with La Porte—Formula of conduct signed by the Queen as the price of the King's pardon—Perplexity of Richelieu in regard to the treatment of Madame de Chevreuse—The duchess is offered a pardon in return for a full confession of her misdeeds—Distrusting the good faith of the Cardinal, she declines to make any admission, and, in the belief that her liberty is threatened, flies to Spain, disguised as a man—Her romantic journey.

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE remained in Touraine for four years—until the summer of 1637—a prey to the most profound ennui. Most heartily did she wish that, instead of being condemned to bury herself alive in the depths of the provinces, far from the gaieties of the Court and the bustle of Paris and all that made existence supportable, she had, as in 1626, received orders to leave France. But Richelieu, recollecting the dangerous activity which the duchess had displayed during her exile in Lorraine, had decided that it would be more prudent to keep her within the realm, where her talent for mischief would have comparatively little scope, than to allow her to establish her-



Queen's letter upon him, and conducted to the Bastille (August 12, 1637).

The letter appears to have been of an innocent character; declining a proposal from the duchess that she should come in disguise to Paris to visit her. But all communication with the exile of Tours had been strictly forbidden; and Richelieu, without hesitation, ordered the Chancellor, Pierre Séguier, to make a descent upon the Hôtel de Chevreuse, where La Porte was staying, and take possession of everything belonging to him, and then to proceed to the Val-de-Grâce and seize the papers of the Queen.

At the Hôtel de Chevreuse some comparatively unimportant papers and the cipher used by La Porte were discovered and impounded, after which the Chancellor, accompanied by the Archbishop of Paris, presented himself at the Val-de-Grâce, penetrated into the apartment of the Queen, seized all her papers, and closely questioned the abbess, having caused the archbishop to command her to speak the truth, in the name of the obedience which she owed him and under pain of excommunication.

Both La Rochefoucauld and Montglat assert that Anne of Austria was actually at the convent at the time, and that the Chancellor "questioned her as though she had been a criminal, and even searched in her pocket and beneath her neckerchief." But this story, accepted by many historians, romancers, and historical painters, is quite without foundation. The Queen was not at the Val-de-Grâce when the Chancellor and the archbishop arrived there, as she had accompanied the King to Chantilly; nor, if she had been present, would the Chancellor have presumed to question her; the royal dignity was absolutely opposed to such a proceeding.

Notwithstanding a most exhaustive search, no documents of an incriminating nature were forthcoming. If



ANNE OF AUSTRIA, QUEEN OF FRANCE  
FROM A MINIATURE AT SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM



we are to believe two eighteenth-century historians, Le Vassor and Anquetil, this result must have occasioned the Chancellor no surprise. "Séguier," says the former, "slave of the Minister, did not refuse the strange commission with which he was entrusted ; but, since he feared to irritate the Queen, who might be able, sooner or later, to avenge so great an affront, he decided to warn her secretly, some say by the Marquis de Coislin, son-in-law of the Chancellor, others by Mère Jeanne, a Carmelite nun of Pontoise, Séguier's sister, a very shrewd young woman. The manner in which this magistrate maintained his position under the regency of Anne of Austria, proves, in my opinion, that he did not disoblige the Queen on this occasion, and that she was pleased with him."<sup>1</sup>

According to Anquetil, it was the abbess of the Val-de-Grâce to whom the Chancellor sent warning, by the Marquis de Coislin, and the reverend Mother lost no time in removing the papers of importance to a place of security.<sup>2</sup>

La Rochefoucauld declares that, on learning of the arrest of La Porte, Anne of Austria was so terrified that she proposed to him to carry off both herself and her favourite maid-of-honour, Mlle. de Hautefort, and to conduct them to Brussels, which he was perfectly ready to do. "I was young," he writes, "and at an age when one loves to do extraordinary and brilliant things, and I could not conceive anything more so than at the same time to carry off the Queen from the King, her husband, and from the Cardinal de Richelieu, who was jealous of her, and to take away Mlle. de Hautefort from the King, who was in love with her."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Le Vassor, *Histoire de Louis XIII.*

<sup>2</sup> Anquetil, *Intrigue de Cabinet.* Saint-Simon, speaking of this affair in his *Mémoires*, says that "Séguier, by his politic conduct on this occasion, assured himself for ever of the favour of the Queen, without committing himself with the King or the Cardinal."

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires.*

It is doubtful if there is any truth in this story of La Rochefoucauld, who had probably taken some thoughtless words uttered by the Queen or Mlle. de Hautefort in the excitement of the moment for a serious proposition. But it is certain that Anne was very frightened indeed, and with good cause, since treasonable correspondence with the King's enemies would be abundant justification for Louis repudiating a barren and disloyal wife, and sending her to seek an asylum among those whose interests she had preferred to his own. It was, however, pointed out to her that the abbess of the Val-de-Grâce would most certainly repudiate all knowledge of the guilty correspondence ; that the letter which had been intercepted was not treasonable, and that she could count absolutely on the fidelity of La Porte ; and, after a little reflection, she resolved to claim indulgence for her indiscretion in communicating with Madame de Chevreuse and to deny her correspondence with Brussels and Madrid.

With the idea that her present peril might mitigate to some degree the sin which she was about to commit, she communicated, and, sending for her Secretary of Orders, Le Gras, swore to him upon the Holy Sacrament, which she had just received, that she had never written to any foreign Power, and bade him go and inform the Cardinal of the oath which she had taken. After which, she summoned the King's Jesuit confessor, Père Caussin, and repeated to him the same oath.

But Anne soon perceived that it would be dangerous for her to persist in a denial so absolute, since, with so many sources of information at his disposal, Richelieu would be sure, sooner or later, to discover that she had lied, even if he were not already aware of it. She therefore decided to admit the fact of her foreign correspondence, while denying that it had had any political significance ; and, sending for the Minister, confessed that

she had perjured herself, as she had written to the Cardinal-Infant in Flanders ; but she protested that it was merely to inquire after his health and other things of little consequence. Richelieu gravely pointed out that it was known that she had written of more important matters than this, and advised her to make a full confession, promising that, if she spoke the truth, the King would pardon everything. The unfortunate Queen assured him that she would do so, and admitted that she had written to her relations at Madrid and Brussels, not only to complain of her situation, but to communicate certain secrets of State. "How good you must be, Monsieur le Cardinal !" cried she, as Richelieu reiterated his assurance of the King's pardon ; and, protesting an eternal gratitude, she held out her hand to him, as a gage of her fidelity. But Richelieu drew back and respectfully declined to take it.

Notwithstanding the Cardinal's assurances of pardon, Anne did not dare to confess everything ; consequently, it was of great importance to her that La Porte, who, though interrogated in turn by Richelieu's most skilful tools, Laffemas and La Poterie, by the Chancellor, and even by the Cardinal himself, and threatened by the question ordinary and extraordinary, still persisted in denying all knowledge of his mistress's correspondence with any other person than Madame de Chevreuse, should now make a confession that should tally with her own, so that the Cardinal might be persuaded that she had kept nothing from him, and search no further for evidence of still more guilty letters. But how was it possible to reach La Porte, shut up in a dungeon in the Bastille, with a warder who only quitted him for a few minutes during the day and slept upon a mattress on the floor at night ? Long and anxiously did the Queen and her friends debate the matter, and they had almost decided

that it would be useless to attempt any communication with a prisoner so closely guarded, when the courage and ingenuity of Mlle. de Hautefort suggested to her a way out of the difficulty.

It will be remembered that, after the grim farce which had been performed at Troyes, the Chevalier de Jars had been taken back to the Bastille, where he occupied a room directly over that of La Porte, though separated from it by two floors. Since the terrible experience through which he had passed, Jars had suffered from partial paralysis, and, perhaps on account of this, he enjoyed more liberty than was usually allowed a prisoner, and was even permitted to receive some of his friends and converse with them in the courtyard of the fortress. Convinced that the brave chevalier, who had already once risked his head for the sake of the Queen, would shrink from no danger on her behalf, Mlle. de Hautefort volunteered to go to the Bastille, disguised as the *soubrette* of Châteauneuf's niece, Madame de Villarceaux, one of the friends of Jars who were occasionally permitted to visit him, and hand him a letter for La Porte, which he was to find some means of conveying to his fellow-prisoner. Her proposal having been accepted by Anne, though not without many misgivings, very early one morning, before any of the inmates of the Louvre were awake, she darkened her face and eyebrows, concealed her beautiful fair hair under a large *coiffe*, assumed the loose gown of a maid-servant, slipped out of the palace, and, calling a *fiacre*, was driven to the Bastille.

On arriving at the fortress, she informed the gate-keeper that she had a message for the Chevalier de Jars, which she had been directed to deliver in person ; but, as the chevalier had not yet risen, she was obliged to wait for some time in the guard-room, exposed to the glances and coarse pleasantries of the soldiers who were



MARIE DE HAUTEFORT, AFTERWARDS DUCHESSE DE SCHOMBERG  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GALLIE





there, and who, from her costume, took her for a damsel of very humble station. At length, the chevalier arrived, not best pleased at being disturbed so early ; but she, drawing him into the courtyard, raised her *coiffe* and revealed to him the beautiful face of the Queen's favourite maid-of-honour, which no one who had once seen it was ever like to forget. She then handed him the letter for La Porte, and told him, in a few words, the service which her Majesty demanded of him.

Jars, brave as he was, was not a little staggered on learning that it was a question of risking his life a second time, and for a while he hesitated. "What, Monsieur !" cried Mlle. de Hautefort, "you hesitate, and you see what I am risking ! For, if I am discovered, what will be said of me ?" "Ah, well !" replied the chevalier, with a shrug of his shoulders, "I must do, I suppose, what the Queen demands ; there is no remedy. I have only just escaped the scaffold ; I am going to return to it."

Mlle. de Hautefort returned to the Louvre, and was fortunate enough to regain her apartments without being recognised ; while Jars retired to his cell to endeavour to devise some means of executing the difficult and dangerous task which had been entrusted to him.

Happily for himself and for the royal lady whom he served, he was not only a very courageous, but a very resourceful person ; and, though what followed reads like a page from one of the most extravagant of the romances of adventure, there seems to be no reason to question its probability, and it has been accepted by even the most eminent historians of the seventeenth century.

The chevalier's cell, as we have already mentioned, was situated directly above that of La Porte, though separated from it by two floors, and he decided to

make an attempt to pass the letter through the intervening cells, the first of which was occupied by some *croquants* of Bordeaux, imprisoned there on account of an insurrection in that city ; and the second by the Baron de Tenance and a man named Réveillon, who had been a servant of the Maréchal de Marillac, executed by Richelieu after the "Day of Dupes." He then took into his confidence a youth called Bois d'Arcy, the valet of another prisoner, the Abbé de Trois, who was confined there with his master ; and one day, when the more favoured prisoners were taking their daily exercise on the terrace of the fortress, Bois d'Arcy had the good fortune to discover part of a broken paving-stone with a sharp point. Waiting until the sentinel who was promenading the terrace had got to the end of his beat, he picked it up and slipped it into his pocket, and, at the same time, seized the opportunity to speak to the *croquants* of Bordeaux and invite their co-operation. This they readily promised him, "for," observes La Porte, "all the prisoners rendered services to one another which are inconceivable, and which I should never have credited, had I not experienced and practised them myself."

Bois d'Arcy then gave them the broken stone, and with it they made two holes, one in the ceiling of their room, through which Jars lowered the Queen's letter to them, at the end of a string, and the other in the floor, through which they passed the letter and the stone on to Tenance and Réveillon in the room below, with directions as to what they were to do with them. The latter likewise made a hole in the floor of their cell, but to transmit the missive to La Porte without detection was no easy matter, since he was guarded both night and day. However, they ascertained that his warder was in the habit of quitting the room for a few minutes each morning, for the purpose of emptying the slops into the ditch

below, and that during the execution of this sanitary performance the prisoner enjoyed a brief spell of solitude. Accordingly, they waited until sounds from below told them that the man had gone out and that La Porte was alone, and then let down the letter to the faithful *valet de chambre*. Acting on the instructions which it contained, La Porte forthwith agreed to confess, and, as his admissions naturally confirmed those of the Queen, Richelieu was convinced that he was now in possession of all that there was to discover.

He therefore advised the King to extend his gracious pardon to his misguided consort, but, at the same time, to insist on her signing a kind of formula of conduct, to which she was to conform religiously. She was forbidden to enter the Val-de-Grâce or any other convent, until such time as his Majesty should give his permission. She was not to write any letter, save in the presence of her *dame d'honneur* and her first waiting-woman, who were charged to communicate its contents to the King, so that, if he judged necessary, he might interrogate her about it; nor to address a single letter to any foreign country, either directly or indirectly. Finally, she was most strictly enjoined never on any account to write to Madame de Chevreuse, "because this pretext had been the cover for all the letters which the Queen had written elsewhere"; or to receive an Englishman, Sir Herbert Croft—a friend of the duchess and of Montagu, who was suspected of being mixed up in all their intrigues—or "any of the other intermediaries of Madame de Chevreuse."<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Louis XIII. and the Cardinal regarded the duchess as the source of every evil, and that they could not consider themselves sure of the Queen until they had separated her from her dangerous friend.

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*.

But they were sorely perplexed how to deal with her. If they left her at Tours, she would probably find some means to communicate with Anne, for she was as full of resource as she was of audacity. If they caused her to be arrested, they would immediately be overwhelmed with solicitations for her release from her relatives in France and her friends at foreign Courts, which would be difficult for them long to resist : besides which, the Cardinal had never imprisoned a woman, and was most reluctant to do so. If they banished her from France, there was no knowing in what new foreign complications her vindictiveness and passion for intrigue might not involve them ; and, any way, they would have to abandon all hope of a good understanding with Charles IV. of Lorraine, which they were most anxious to bring about.

Richelieu, therefore, proposed that, instead of resorting to violent measures, they should treat her as they had treated the Queen, provided that she was prepared to make full confession of her misdeeds and promise amendment. And, to prove the sincerity of his desire to forget the past and be reconciled to her, the Cardinal, learning that she was at this moment in some financial embarrassment, owing, it would appear, to the senseless extravagance of her husband, sent her a considerable sum of money.

Victor Cousin is inclined to see in the continued indulgence of Richelieu towards Madame de Chevreuse evidence that "this heart of iron, this pitiless soul, was unable to defend itself against an involuntary feebleness for a woman who combined in her person, and bore in the highest degree, those two great gifts so rarely united—beauty and courage." But the reasons given above are surely sufficient to explain his leniency, without seeking for any more romantic motive !

Madame de Chevreuse graciously accepted the money sent her by the Cardinal, on the understanding that it

was to be regarded, not as a gift, but as a loan ; but the envoys whom he despatched to Touraine endeavoured in vain to persuade her of his good faith. She saw in his friendly overtures nothing but a lure to entrap her into damaging admissions which would justify him in condemning her to share the fate of her friends, Jars and Châteauneuf, and, beyond admitting that she had corresponded with the Queen, which it was, of course, useless for her to deny, she would confess to nothing. She even had the effrontery to assert that, when she had proposed to visit her Majesty in disguise, so far from having any idea of inciting her against the Cardinal, she had actually intended to employ the influence she possessed over her in favour of the Minister.

Richelieu was at a loss what to do with a lady who, instead of acknowledging her misdeeds and accepting the pardon offered her, persisted in taking up an attitude of injured innocence. But, since, as we have seen, he was most averse to having her arrested, and equally reluctant to drive her from the kingdom, the matter would probably have ended in her being allowed to remain in Touraine under close surveillance, had not Madame de Chevreuse herself solved the difficulty.

Although Anne of Austria had solemnly engaged to hold no further communication with the duchess, she had no difficulty in persuading herself that the promise she had given applied only to direct forms of communication, and accordingly sent for La Rochefoucauld, who was on the point of setting out for Poitou, and charged him to stop at Tours and inform Madame de Chevreuse of all that had passed. La Rochefoucauld had just given a similar promise to his father and to Richelieu's confidant, Chavigny, but, though his conscience would not permit him personally to undertake the Queen's commission, he considered that he was at liberty to depute it to another,

and sent the Englishman Croft to Tours. Thither Mlle. de Hautefort had some time before despatched one of her relatives, M. de Montalais, and this gentleman had arranged with the duchess that, if events at the Court took a favourable turn, her friends should send her a prayer-book bound in green ; but that, if she received one in a red binding, she must hasten to provide for her safety. The book arrived in due course, but, through some misunderstanding, the red one had been sent, and Madame de Chevreuse, who preferred to condemn herself to a new exile than run the risk of imprisonment, determined to make her escape to Spain with the least possible delay.

She had, it appears, been contemplating this step for some time, in the event of her liberty being imperilled, and had confided her resolve to her ancient adorer the Archbishop of Tours, "who," observes La Rochefoucauld, "was more zealous for her interests than became a man of his age and profession." The archbishop, a native of Béarn, provided her with letters of introduction to his relatives on the Spanish frontier, and all the necessary information as to the different roads which she must follow ; and on September 6, 1637, she ordered her carriage, giving out that she intended to visit the Duc and Duchesse de Montbazou, at one of their country-houses some distance from Tours. As soon as darkness fell, however, she ordered the coachman to stop, disguised herself as a man, in a long, fair perruque, cloak, and riding-boots, and, leaving her carriage, mounted a horse which was in waiting, and, followed by two servants, named Renaud and Hilaire, also on horseback, took the road to the South.

When she had ridden some five or six leagues, she discovered, to her consternation, that, in her haste, she had left in the carriage the letters and the itinerary which

the enamoured archbishop had given her ; but it was then too late to turn back, and she was obliged to continue her journey. She travelled the whole night, and, in the morning, arrived, worn out with fatigue, at Ruffec, a league from the Château of Verteuil, where La Rochefoucauld was then staying.

Either from reluctance to compromise him with the Cardinal, or from fear lest her identity might be discovered, she did not visit the château, but wrote him the following note :

“ Monsieur, I am a French gentleman and demand your services, on behalf of my liberty and perhaps of my life. I have had the misfortune to fight a duel, and have killed a nobleman of distinction. This obliges me to quit France immediately, because I am being searched for. I believe you to have sufficient generosity to aid me, although you do not know me. I need a carriage and a valet to assist me.”

La Rochefoucauld sent her a carriage and one of his lackeys named Poter, who, subsequently, when interrogated by the authorities, admitted that he had a suspicion as to who the stranger was, though he was not absolutely certain. Under the guidance of this man, she set out at once for another house belonging to La Rochefoucauld, occupied by a gentleman in his service, named Malbasty, where she arrived at three o'clock in the morning.

Malbasty was not a little astonished at the advent of a carriage and three horsemen at such an hour ; but his wife, looking out of the window, recognised Poter and came down and opened the door. Poter told her that the gentleman in the carriage was an intimate friend of his master, and was obliged to escape from France, on account of a duel. Malbasty, arriving on the scene, inquired the gentleman's name, as he wished to know whom he was to serve. “ To which the unknown replied



that he would tell him on the morrow, and asked him to accompany him for a day or two on his journey, since he feared that the two men who were with him might be recognised, and intended to leave them there until he sent them further orders.”<sup>1</sup>

Renaud and Hilaire accordingly remained at Malbasty's house, and, La Rochefoucauld's carriage having been sent back to Verteuil, Madame de Chevreuse mounted a horse, which her host procured for her, and, followed by Malbasty and Poter, took the road to the Spanish frontier. “She wore a black cloak and doublet of the same colour. She had her head bandaged and a piece of black taffeta over it, and told Malbasty that a sword-wound which she had received in the duel prevented her wearing her hat.”

At noon, they stopped to dine at a village-inn. Madame de Chevreuse wished to rest for an hour or two ; but the beds were so uninviting that she preferred to take her siesta upon a heap of straw in a barn. The duchess would appear to have been as attractive to her own sex in the garb of a cavalier as she was to the other in the dazzling toilettes of a great lady of the Court, for presently a young woman happened to pass by, and, seeing her stretched upon the straw, exclaimed : “That is the handsomest lad I have ever seen !” Then, approaching the supposed cavalier, she added : “Monsieur, come and rest yourself at my house ; you arouse my compassion.”

The duchess excused herself, on the plea that she was in haste to continue her journey, “speaking, however, in a low tone, because, as she said, she had a cold which prevented her raising her voice.” The young woman noticed that the unappetising dinner which lay by the handsome stranger's side had not been touched. She

<sup>1</sup> *Extrait de l'information faite par le président Vignier de la sortie de Mme. de Chevreuse hors de France*, Bib. Nat. Collection du Puy.

went away, and returned with some fresh eggs, of which she persuaded Madame de Chevreuse to eat four.

Many were the adventures which befell the duchess during that romantic ride. One morning, at an inn, where she had stopped for the night, a chambermaid, entering her room, found her without the fair perruque which played so important a part in her disguise—a *contretemps* which involved a hasty resumption of her journey. On another occasion, she encountered a party of horsemen, among whom was the Marquis d'Antin, with whom she was well acquainted, and was obliged to turn aside to avoid being recognised. Then, in a valley of the Pyrenees, she was addressed by a gentleman who had seen her in Paris, and who told her that he should have taken her for Madame de Chevreuse, if she had been dressed differently. To which the fair fugitive replied, with imperturbable *sang-froid*, that, since she was a relative of that lady, it was quite possible that she resembled her.

Malbasty pressed her to tell him her name, as she had promised. She replied that she was the Duc d'Enghien, and that reasons which it was impossible to reveal obliged her to leave France for a time. Finally, however, just before they separated, being convinced that he was an honest man, with whom her secret would be perfectly safe, she confessed that she was the Duchesse de Chevreuse.

Malbasty left with her son, whom his wife had sent after him to ascertain why he had not returned. He warned her that it was most dangerous for her to traverse the roads on the farther side of the mountains with only the protection of one man—Poter had already returned to Verteuil—since they were infested with robbers; but she told him that the governor of the first town in Spain would send his carriage to meet her,

and that the viceroy of Saragossa had orders from the Queen to render every assistance.

Observing the worthy man's surprise, she hastened to assure him that "she should do no disservice to the King or his Eminence, to whom she was under too many obligations ; that she should see neither the King nor the Queen of Spain, but should make her way to England ; and that she should have gone thither and not to Spain, if the roads to the French coast had not been closed to her."<sup>1</sup>

On parting, she offered Malbastay a large rouleau of pistoles, but he would only accept sufficient money to defray the expenses of his journey home.

Before crossing the frontier, the duchess wrote to the gentleman whom she had met in the Pyrenees, telling him that he had not been deceived in suspecting that she was Madame de Chevreuse, and that, "since she had found in him extraordinary courtesy, she took the liberty of asking him to procure her clothes to enable her to attire herself in conformity with her sex and her rank."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the news of the flight of Madame de Chevreuse had reached the Court. Richelieu was greatly troubled, and lost no time in despatching couriers, with orders to the authorities of the districts through which she was expected to pass to stop the fugitive, instructing them, however, that they were not to place her under arrest, but merely to prevent her continuing her journey. He also sent one of his confidants, the Président Vignier, to inform the duchess that she had nothing whatever to fear, and that not only might she reside at Tours in full liberty, but that, in all probability, she would shortly be permitted to return to Dampierre. The Duc de Chevreuse likewise sent Boispile, the intendant of his household, after his wife, but neither he nor Vignier were able to

<sup>1</sup> *Extrait de l'information faite par le président Vignier, etc.*

<sup>2</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

overtake the fugitive, who had passed the Pyrenees before they reached the frontier. Vignier sent a herald into Spain to announce to Madame de Chevreuse that she might return in safety to France ; but the duchess did not hear of his arrival until after she had reached Madrid.

On his way back to Paris, the president stopped at Tours, where, in virtue of the authority with which he had been invested by Richelieu, he summoned the old archbishop, La Rochefoucauld, and various other persons before him, and subjected them to a searching examination. The information thus elicited was forwarded to the Cardinal, who caused La Rochefoucauld to be arrested, conducted to Paris, and thrown into the Bastille, from which, however, he was soon released.

## CHAPTER VIII

Madame de Chevreuse arrives at Madrid—Consideration which she enjoys at the Spanish Court—After a few months, however, she decides to proceed to England, where she is very cordially received—Her letter to Anne of Austria—Her financial embarrassments—She enters into negotiations with Richelieu, for the purpose of obtaining a royal pardon which will enable her to return in safety to France—*Abolition* of February 1539—Madame de Chevreuse declines to accept it—Arrival of Marie de' Medici in England—Richelieu agrees to a modification of the royal pardon—But the duchess receives an anonymous letter warning her not to return to France—The Cardinal sends her fresh assurances and a sum of money for the payment of her debts—But Madame de Chevreuse is again warned of the danger which awaits her in France—Rupture of the negotiations.

**I**F Madame de Chevreuse had been the consort of a Sovereign in alliance with Spain, she could hardly have received a more flattering reception. As soon as Philip IV. learned of the arrival in his kingdom of his sister's intrepid friend, he issued orders that she was to be received with every mark of distinction, and at some distance from Madrid she was met by several of the royal carriages, each drawn by six horses and occupied by officers of the Court, who escorted her the rest of the way to the capital, where the populace crowded to see and acclaim her.

Although the duchess was now in her thirty-eighth year, she was still almost as beautiful as ever, while to her physical attractions and her singular charm of manner she joined the prestige of the romantic adventures through which she had just passed. The King was completely captivated and overwhelmed her with all kinds of attentions ; the Queen, Élisabeth of France, seemed never

tired of hearing her discourse upon the splendours of that Court which she herself had quitted at too early an age to have more than tasted its pleasures, and held long conferences with her, with the object of modifying the ugly and antiquated modes affected by the Spanish ladies and assimilating them to the elegant toilettes of the French *grandes dames* ; while the Prime Minister, Olivarez, as sensible of the qualities of her mind as he was of the graces of her person, talked with her upon affairs of State, and is said to have sometimes allowed himself to be guided by her counsels.

However, notwithstanding all the consideration which she enjoyed at the Spanish Court, Madame de Chevreuse did not remain there very long. The war then in progress between France and Spain rendered her situation a very delicate one ; for she was anxious to make her peace with Louis XIII. and Richelieu and return to France, as soon as she could obtain from them an unconditional pardon for her offences ; and of that there could be no question so long as she continued an honoured guest at Madrid. Moreover, she found herself cut off from all news of her friends in Paris, for, though her letters were with great difficulty smuggled through to them, such was the dread inspired by Richelieu's police, and so fearful was every one of being accused of correspondence with the enemy, that they dared not write to her ; and even the intendant of her household, Boispille, on receiving one of her letters, said to the messenger, who demanded an answer : " We do not write to Spain."

She therefore decided to proceed to England, a neutral and even a friendly country, where she would be nearer Paris and have little difficulty in communicating with her friends there. Her request for permission to take up her residence in London received a most favourable answer, and in March 1638 she landed in England, having

made the voyage in a ship which had been sent to fetch her.

Madame de Chevreuse received in London as warm a welcome as had been accorded her in Madrid. Henriette Marie had always been fond of her, and, moreover, regarded her as a partisan of her mother's cause; while, during her previous visit to England, twelve years before, the duchess had succeeded in making a very favourable impression upon Charles I. She found there, too, her first adorer Lord Holland, Walter Montagu, and other admirers, prepared to welcome her with open arms—in more than one instance, we suspect, in the literal as well as the figurative sense of the expression—and several French gentlemen, whom the Cardinal had driven into exile, who formed about her a regular Court. The King assigned her a lodging in the garden at Whitehall, and, notwithstanding the alarming condition of the royal finances, offered to provide her with a pension to enable her to live in a state suited to her rank, which, however, she declined to accept; and the Queen permitted her to be seated in her presence, to the great indignation of the French Ambassador, whose wife was denied this distinction. Both their Majesties wrote to Louis XIII., Anne of Austria, and Richelieu to intercede for the duchess, and, not long after her arrival in England, Madame de Chevreuse herself took advantage of the public announcement of the pregnancy of the Queen of France and the joy which this had occasioned to address to her royal friend a diplomatic epistle, which was intended for the eye of Louis XIII. as well :

*“To the QUEEN, MY SOVEREIGN LADY*

*“MADAME,—I should not be worthy of pardon if I were able and failed to render account to your Majesty*



**HENRIETTA MARIA**  
FROM THE PAINTING BY VAN DYCK AT WINDSOR





of the journey that my misfortune has obliged me to undertake. But necessity having constrained me to enter Spain, where respect for your Majesty caused me to be received and treated better than I deserved, that which I bear to you imposed silence upon me, until I was in a kingdom which, being on good terms with France, gives me no reason to apprehend that you would be displeased at receiving letters therefrom. This one will speak before everything of the peculiar joy that I feel at the pregnancy of your Majesty. God rewards and consoles all those who belong to her by this blessing, which I demand of Him with all my heart may end in the birth of a dauphin. Although my ill-fortune prevents me from being one of the first to see him, believe that my affection in your Majesty's service will not leave me one of the last to rejoice. The recollection which I cannot doubt that your Majesty has of what I owe to her, and that which I have of what I desire to render to her, will sufficiently persuade her of the distress that I have experienced at seeing myself reduced to separate from her, to escape the troubles which I feared that unjust suspicions might bring upon me. I have been obliged to deprive myself of the consolation of alleviating my sufferings by telling them to your Majesty, until this hour, when I am able to complain to her of my ill-fortune, hoping that her protection will guarantee me against the anger of the King and the bad graces of the Cardinal. I do not dare to speak of it myself to his Majesty, nor shall I do so to the Cardinal, being assured that your generosity will do it, and will render agreeable what might be importunate, if it came from me. The virtue of your Majesty assures me that she will exercise it willingly on this occasion, and that she will employ her charity to tell me what I know : that she is still the same. Your Majesty will know, from the letters of the King and Queen of Great Britain, the

honour that they are doing me. I know not better how to express it than in telling your Majesty that it merits her gratitude. I believe that you will approve of my stay at their Court, which will not render me worthy of worse treatment, and which will not cause me to be refused the things which the authority of your Majesty and the care of the Cardinal procured for me before my departure from France, and which I am demanding from my husband.<sup>1</sup> In which I entreat your Majesty to protect me, in order that I may soon have the very reasonable results that I am expecting therefrom."

Under cover of this official letter was a confidential note, in which the duchess begged the Queen to refund to Richelieu the money which he had sent her while she was at Tours, and the inability to repay which seems to have weighed heavily upon her proud spirit. It appears, from this letter, that her Majesty had borrowed a large sum from her former *Surintendant* and that the loan had not been repaid. "I have charged the bearer of this," she writes, "to acquaint you with a matter which I cannot forget, nor conceal from you. The position in which I find myself deprives me of the means of paying it; while yours enables you easily to acquit it. I beseech you to do so, and, moreover, to make known your resentment. If you could discharge the remainder of the debt, believe that it would be very acceptable to her who is entirely yours, which I know that you think, and that I shall not be able to recompense you for the benefit that you will confer on me in this matter."

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Chevreuse had brought her second husband a very large fortune, into which, however, the duke's reckless extravagance had made serious inroads. Some time before, she had commenced a suit against him for profligate expenditure, and had demanded a *séparation de biens*, which she obtained. But, after her flight from France, the Government refused to allow the decree to take effect.

Whether Anne found it easy to acquit her friend's debt to the Cardinal is not recorded, but it is certain that she did not repay the balance of the money which she had received until some years later, since, in her subsequent letters, Madame de Chevreuse complains of the financial straits to which she was reduced and of the debts she had been obliged to contract in London. Unwilling to compromise herself with the Spaniards, she had refused the pension which Philip IV. had offered her while at Madrid, as she had refused assistance from Charles I. ; but she recognised that she would be obliged to appeal to one or the other, or to raise money on her jewels, which, on her departure from France, she had left in the keeping of La Rochefoucauld. She was, besides, weary of exile, and anxious about her children, and particularly her daughter Charlotte, now at an age when a mother's supervision was much needed.

These considerations determined her to resume with Richelieu the negotiations which, though interrupted by her flight to Spain, had never been entirely broken off, and which promised a successful termination, since the Cardinal was no less anxious than the duchess to come to an understanding. He feared that she would take advantage of her residence in London to resume those intrigues with the Queen's party on behalf of Marie de' Medici which had already caused him so much embarrassment ; and he was particularly anxious for a *rapprochement* with Charles IV. of Lorraine—which would leave him free to concentrate all the forces of France against Austria and Spain—and knew that there was little chance of effecting this, so long as Madame de Chevreuse continued to influence that prince against him.

And so, at the beginning of June 1638, Madame de Chevreuse resumed the interrupted negotiations, by addressing to the Cardinal the following letter :

"MONSIEUR,—I do not doubt that you are satisfied with the reason which has prevented me until this hour from writing to you, since it has been given you by a person [the Queen] from whom I hope as much indulgence as justice from you. Now, having learned that which I easily believe, from the desire I have for it, that you will receive this letter agreeably, I write it to you with much pleasure, in the full assurance that the truth will be well received by you, without the assistance that your kindness promises to the person from whom it comes. I hope that the misfortune which constrained me to leave France is weary of following me so long, and that the suspicions which have given me apprehension will have in part justified my fear, of which I should be very pleased to be altogether cured by the knowledge that my enemies were not more powerful than my innocence. I am unable better to recompense your kindness than by attributing to it the different requests that were made to me<sup>1</sup>; concerning which, I felt obliged to go away, in order to gain the only thing I needed to justify myself, namely, time. The assurances that I am given of your kindness for me causes me to hope for the success which I am promised. I desire it extremely, and, since the honours and favours that I have everywhere received, instead of extinguishing my gratitude, serve only to make it the more lively, you ought to be assured that they contribute to the memory of the favours received from you; for, while I possess this quality, you can never lose that of,

"Monsieur,

"Your very humble and very affectionate servant,

"M. DE ROHAN

"GRENICHE (*sic*), June 1"

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Chevreuse presumably refers to the requests made to her before her departure to purchase the royal pardon by a confession of her misdeeds.

This letter, notwithstanding the expressions of confidence which it contains, is, in reality, very reserved, and shows that the writer was still determined to maintain her innocence, in the belief that to make the admissions which had been required of her as the price of the royal pardon would be to place in the Cardinal's hands a weapon which he would not scruple to employ against her the moment he had, or pretended to have, reason to be dissatisfied with her conduct.

Richelieu, on his side, much as he desired a better understanding with the duchess, was equally resolved that forgiveness for the past should not be accorded her without some guarantee for her future good behaviour. "Madame," he answers, "what you write me is conceived in such terms that, not being able to consent to it without acting against your own interests through excess of complaisance, I do not wish to answer you, from fear of displeasing you in desiring to serve you. In a word, Madame, if you are innocent, your safety depends on yourself, and if the levity of the human mind, not to say that of the sex, has caused you to commit something of which his Majesty has cause to complain, you will find in his goodness everything that you can possibly expect from it."

Madame de Chevreuse rejoined by a long memoir, in which she explained the motives which had determined her to leave France, and rendered an account of her conduct since that event. She had fled, she declared, because of the persistent efforts which had been made to induce her to confess that she had written to the Duke of Lorraine to prevent him from breaking with Spain and coming to an understanding with France, and that, perceiving that his Eminence was persuaded of this, and being given to understand that he derived his information from letters which had been intercepted in the duchy of

Luxembourg, she had preferred to leave her country, rather than remain there an object of suspicion and in perpetual danger. She further declared that, since her departure from France, her behaviour had been scrupulously correct; that she had refused to accept a sol from either the Spanish or the English Governments; that she had only written four letters from Spain, two of which were despatched before her arrival at Madrid; that, while there, she had "spoken as she ought, and believed that this was one of the things which had made her the most esteemed by the count-duke [Olivarez], who, she believed, had not abated the high opinion which he held of his Eminence"; and that, on her arrival in England, she had "held the same discourse, and had expressed herself in such a manner concerning the obligations under which the goodwill and kindness of his Eminence had placed her, that she had almost run the risk of causing her own fears to be condemned."

This document had no effect upon Richelieu, who had had too much experience of the effrontery of which the lady was capable to attach any weight to her protestations of innocence. Accordingly, while overwhelming her with compliments and assurances of his desire to serve her, he advised her to conceal nothing, insinuating that the Government had in its possession evidence which rendered any denial on her part perfectly futile.

After further correspondence, in which the duchess professed herself deeply afflicted at being suspected of a crime which she had never committed, and the Cardinal continued to press her to confess, at the end of February 1639, Richelieu sent her a royal declaration which authorised her to return to France with an absolute pardon for her past conduct, and particularly for the negotiations she had carried on with the Duke of Lorraine, contrary to the service of the King.



CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU  
FROM THE PAINTING BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAIGNE





Madame de Chevreuse, however, declined to accept an *abolition* which, she asserted, "blackened" her with a crime which she had never committed. She also took exception to the terms of the declaration respecting the manner in which she was to be permitted to live on her return to France. These, she said, did not state clearly that she was to remain at liberty. She was willing to condemn herself not to see the Queen and not to engage in any correspondence with foreign countries, but outside this she demanded an entire liberty.

The Cardinal was exceedingly irritated at the way in which Madame de Chevreuse continued to detect and elude all his efforts to induce her to compromise herself; but an event which had occurred some months before made him more than ever anxious to draw her back to France.

In the previous summer, Marie de' Medici, wearying of her sojourn at Brussels, where the Spaniards, to whom she had long ceased to be of use, now treated her with the coldest courtesy, had betaken herself to the Hague, whence, in the last days of September, she suddenly descended upon England. Charles I., knowing that the mere presence of the exiled Queen in his dominions might be sufficient to embroil him with France, had always steadily refused to grant her an asylum, notwithstanding all the tears and entreaties of his consort; but, on this occasion, the astute old lady left her royal son-in-law no choice in the matter of receiving her, her arrival being "so flat and sudden a surprisal as, without our ports should have been shut against her, it was not to be avoided."<sup>1</sup> And so the unfortunate monarch was obliged to make the best of a most embarrassing situation; and Marie de' Medici proceeded to establish herself at St. James's and to make of it a centre for all the restless schemers whom Richelieu had driven from France.

<sup>1</sup> Windebank.

The Cardinal was justly alarmed by the arrival of the Queen-Mother and her *entourage* on British soil, for it was felt everywhere that England, distracted though she was by internal dissensions, might yet prove a formidable opponent to the French plans of aggrandisement. He had a strong suspicion that Madame de Chevreuse had been no stranger to her Majesty's latest move, and foresaw that, if these two inveterate intriguers were to lay their heads together, trouble would be sure to come of it. To avert this, he consented to modify the royal pardon which had displeased the duchess, and sent her in its place the following *abolition*, which, since it was couched in more gentle terms and made no mention of her dealings with the Duke of Lorraine, would, he hoped, bring her sojourn in England to a termination.

“Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre, to all present and to come, Greeting :

“We have no greater displeasure than when we see ourselves obliged, by the necessity of the welfare and repose of our State, to allow the course of justice to proceed to some example of severity, to maintain our subjects in their duty and those of the highest rank in the obedience that they owe to us. And, on the contrary, it is a great satisfaction to us when, by the acknowledgment of their faults, they give us cause to forget them. Our cousin, the Duchess de Chevreuse, has as much knowledge as any one in the world that our inclination is to clemency rather than to rigour ; whereof, being now wishful to bestow upon her a peculiar proof, in the matter of her last departure from the realm, contrary to the order and the express command that she had from us to remain in our town of Tours, and her sojourn in an enemy's country, and *other faults* that she may have committed in consequence against the fidelity and service that she

owes to us, we make known that we have favourably received her very humble petition, on the subject of the said faults, and by these present, signed by our own hand, we have remitted, quitted, pardoned, and annulled, do remit, quit, pardon, and annul for our cousin, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, the fault that she has committed in leaving our town of Tours against the express command that we had given her to remain there, together with her departure from our realm without our permission and her withdrawal into the country of our declared enemies, and generally all other crimes and faults that she may have committed in consequence against our intentions and the service and fidelity that she owes us. It is our pleasure that, for the said faults, she may not be able henceforth to be called to account in any fashion whatsoever, and, in respect of this, we impose perpetual silence on our attorneys-general and their substitutes present and to come, and have restored and do restore her to the same station in which she was previous to them. Therefore, we give command to our trusty and well-beloved counsellors, the persons holding our Court of Parlement at Paris, to register our present grace and pardon, and suffer and allow our said cousin, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, fully and peaceably to enjoy her property, and to ratify it without requiring our said cousin to appear before them, from which we have dispensed and do dispense her by our special grace, full power, and royal authority. For such is our pleasure. And so that this matter may be firm and stable for all time, we have caused our seal to be placed upon the said propositions, saving in all else our right and authority.

“Given at Saint-Germain-en-Laie, in the month of March, in the year of Grace 1639, and in the twenty-ninth of our reign.

“[Signed] LOUIS, *par le Roy*—BOUTHILLIER ”

It might at first sight be supposed that this new declaration would have satisfied Madame de Chevreuse ; but such was far from being the case, for, 'though the only offence which was actually specified was her departure from France, it absolved her from "all other crimes and faults that she may have committed against the service and fidelity that she owed the King." In other words, Richelieu was endeavouring to arrive at his end by a circuitous road, and to impose upon her, indirectly at least, a confession of misdeeds which she had refused to admit specifically. Thus, if she availed herself of the royal clemency and returned to France, she would still be to a great extent in the Cardinal's power.

However, by this time the duchess had fallen so deeply into debt and had become so anxious about her family, whose situation, owing to the sequestration of her revenues, was a most embarrassing one, that her desire to return to France overcame her misgivings. Accordingly, after a last protest, she intimated that she was prepared to accept the pardon offered her, and even went so far as to authorise her intendant Boisville and the Abbé du Dorat, who had acted as intermediaries throughout this negotiation, to sign in her name a document wherein she asked pardon for her "past bad conduct"—she was careful not to specify in what it had consisted—engaged on her return to France to hold no communication, either within or without the realm, with any one who was an object of suspicion to the King, and promised that, if she were permitted to reside at Dampierre, she would not visit Paris, "either secretly or openly."

Richelieu, satisfied at having gained the main part of what he desired, decided to grant the duchess's request that she should reside at Dampierre, and, under date April 23, 1639, wrote to her as follows :

"Madame—Having learned, from the Sieurs du

Dorat and de Boisville, of the extremity in which you are situated, the desire that you have to be in a place where you can put your affairs in order, and the charge that you have given them to assure me of your good intentions and of the passion that you have to be able to be of use to the service of the King, I have made no difficulty about entreating the King to trust your promises and to give you liberty to come and reside at Dampierre. This letter is to show you that his Majesty, believing your assurances, accords you the favour that you have desired in this matter. You are then able, Madame, to enjoy it in safety, and to believe that, on this occasion and every other, I shall be very pleased to prove to you that I am, etc."

Everything appeared to be satisfactorily arranged, when, at the end of April, Madame de Chevreuse received a mysterious letter, undated and unsigned, warning her that, if she returned to France, she would be a lost woman :

"I must not be to you that which I am to fail to tell you that, if you love 25 [Madame de Chevreuse], you will prevent her ruin, which is certain in France, where they only desire 25 [Madame de Chevreuse] in order to ruin her. This is not an opinion, but sure knowledge ; there is no other remedy than to follow this advice to protect 25 [Madame de Chevreuse], of whom 61 [Richelieu] has said affirmatively too much evil touching 33 [Spain] and touching intelligence with 42 [Charles IV. of Lorraine], not to say anything about it in the future. Finally, there is nothing for 25 [Madame de Chevreuse] at this hour but patience, or sure perdition, and eternal regret for 54 [the writer]."

This epistle, which seemed to confirm the suspicions which she had all along entertained as to the sincerity of the Cardinal's assurances, greatly troubled the duchess. She authorised Boisville to communicate it to Richelieu

and, with the object of gaining time, begged him to inform his Eminence that it was impossible for her to leave England until the most pressing of the debts she had contracted there had been discharged.

Towards the middle of May, Boispile proceeded to France, where Richelieu handed him and Du Dorat the sum of 18,000 livres—"to enable the said lady to return and accomplish the good intentions that she has for the service of the King," runs the receipt. The Cardinal would also appear to have sent fresh assurances to the duchess, which had succeeded in allaying her fears and persuading her that no importance need be attached to the anonymous warning which she had received; for when Boispile returned to England, he found that she had already fixed the day of her departure for Dover, and had written to Charles I., who was at Newcastle with the Army, to thank him for his hospitality and bid him farewell, and to the Duc de Chevreuse, asking him to send a carriage to await her at Dieppe.

But, at this moment, the duchess received another warning letter, no longer anonymous, but signed by one of the persons most devoted to her in the world, none other than her old lover, the Duke of Lorraine. It was as follows :

"I am positive of the design which the Cardinal de Richelieu is contemplating to offer you all things imaginable to oblige you to return to France, and forthwith to cause you to perish miserably. The Marquis de Ville, who has spoken to him and to M. de Chavigny, will inform you further of the matter, since he heard it himself. I am now awaiting him, and, if I believed that I possessed sufficient influence over your mind to turn you from taking this resolution, I should go to throw myself at your feet, to make you comprehend your absolute ruin,

and to implore you, by all which can be most dear to you in the world, to avoid this misfortune, too cruel for all the earth, but for me more insupportable than for any one in the world, protesting to you that, if my own ruin were able to ensure your repose, I should esteem this occasion very happy which procured it for me, and that nothing else causes me to serve you but consideration for you alone, being for ever, Madame, your very affectionate servant,

“CHARLES DE LORRAINE

“CIRK, 26 May 1639”

On receiving this new warning, Madame de Chevreuse at once sent for Boispile, who found her “in extreme distress and unimaginable apprehension.”<sup>1</sup> She showed him the letter, and Boispile, profiting by the arrival of George Digby and some other visitors, which caused the duchess to leave it for some minutes in his hands, surreptitiously made a copy, which he despatched to France by a special courier. Richelieu sent the man back with a note for Boispile, which he was authorised to show his mistress :

“M. du Dorat having informed me that he fears that people are unseasonably disquieting the mind of Madame de Chevreuse, in encouraging in her apprehensions which have no foundation, this note is to assure the Sieur Boispile that Madame de Chevreuse has nothing to fear in France, and that she will have there every security, and that, if any one wishes to persuade her to the contrary, he is wickedly deceiving her.

“The said Sieur Boispile may show this note to Madame de Chevreuse ; to which I add these three lines in my own hand, in order that she may the sooner recognise its authenticity.”

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Boispile to Richelieu, June 5, 1639.



The Cardinal's assurances, however, failed to make any impression upon Madame de Chevreuse, who, while thanking his Eminence for them, informed him that she did not intend to return to France until after she had seen the Marquis de Ville, whom the Duke of Lorraine was sending to her.

The marquis was a Lorraine noble, and one of Charles IV.'s most trusted friends. Some time before, he had been taken prisoner by the French and incarcerated in the Bastille, from which he had not long been released. Owing to an attack of illness, it was not until the beginning of August that he arrived in London, when he confirmed the warning that Madame de Chevreuse had received from his master, and did everything possible to persuade her not to trust herself in the Cardinal's power. At the duchess's suggestion, he explained the object of his mission in the presence of Boispile, who subsequently rendered an account of it to Richelieu, and declared that, on his liberation from the Bastille some months before, he had been escorted as far as Charenton by a man named Lange, who said to him that, knowing that he was devoted to the interests of Madame de Chevreuse, he felt obliged to warn him that that lady would be ruined if she returned to France ; that he had pressed the man to give him further information on this matter, whereupon he related that, two days before, he had overheard a conversation between the Cardinal and Chavigny, in which his Eminence had expressed himself very displeased at the duchess's persistence in denying that she had counselled the Duke of Lorraine to refuse to be reconciled with France ; that Chavigny was also very much annoyed, and that both had declared that the evidence against Madame de Chevreuse was so clear that, once they had her in France, they would soon make her confess, with the aid of her letters, which she refused to

believe were in their possession ; and that, if she thought to deceive them, she was deceiving herself.<sup>1</sup>

That the Duke of Lorraine, driven from his States by Richelieu and forced to adopt the wandering life of a soldier of fortune, should have been anxious to retain so valuable an auxiliary as Madame de Chevreuse in the camp of the Cardinal's enemies, was so obvious that, in ordinary circumstances, the duchess would perhaps have not attached any great importance to this story. But when she recalled the persistent efforts which Richelieu had made for so many months to induce her to compromise herself, either directly or indirectly, the matter assumed an altogether different aspect, and alarmed her greatly. Ardently as she desired to see her country and her family again, she shrank from hazarding her liberty, and she resolved that, unless she could obtain the most absolute guarantees from Louis XIII., she would refuse to return to France.

She therefore professed her willingness to return, provided the King would send her a new *abolition*, which she drafted herself and handed to Boispille for transmission to the Cardinal. It differed from that of the previous March in two essential particulars. In the first place, it expressly absolved her from "whatever negotiations she *may* have carried on with foreigners contrary to the service of the King"; and, in the second, it declared that this applied to actions committed both *before* and since her departure from Tours. (The correspondence of Madame de Chevreuse with Charles IV. of Lorraine, which led to the duke's refusal to be reconciled with France, had preceded her flight to Spain.) The effect of such a document would be to tie Richelieu's hands most securely, and render her return to France perfectly safe.

<sup>1</sup> "Écrit du marquis de Ville contenant qu'il avoit appris qu'il n'y avoit point de sûreté en France pour Mme. de Chevreuse."—*Manuscrits de Colbert*.

Under date August 30, 1639, the Cardinal replied to the lady's proposition, declaring that it was impossible for his Majesty to accord her another *abolition*, but, at the same time, giving her renewed assurances in the matter of the Duke of Lorraine.

"The King," he writes, "has deemed it very strange that, having received your *abolition* these three months, in the form that you desired at the time, and for which it pleased you to thank me yourself, you have made a difficulty about making use of it, as you declared it was your intention to do. I confess that, up to the present, I have not known to what to ascribe your delay, unless it be to a resolution you have taken not to return to France. The intelligence that God has given you has prevented me from believing that the false advice that you may have received was capable of producing an effect so prejudicial to your own interests, since I deemed you to be too judicious not to know that his Majesty would not be willing, for any consideration in the world, to accord you a pardon for a matter concerning which he intended to call you to account in France. Since he is not in Paris, he has been unable to send you a new one ; and, when he arrives there, he will not judge it timely to do so, seeing that the one you have, which has already been altered several times to please you, could not be more ample or more explicit.

"However, because the Sieur de Ville has endeavoured to persuade you that it was intended to call you to account over the matter of Monsieur de Lorraine, I do not fear to tell you that the King has not, and never has had, such intention, and that you will enjoy your *abolition* according to its full and entire effect, without anything further being said of negotiations conducted with Monsieur de Lorraine."

If, after this refusal, Madame de Chevreuse had still had any hesitation as to the course she should pursue, it would

certainly have been removed by the arrival of another warning, emanating from no less a personage than her august friend and accomplice, Anne of Austria. On September 12, we find the Abbé du Dorat, one of the intermediaries in this affair, writing to the Cardinal as follows :

"It is some days ago, Monseigneur, since I asked M. Chère to communicate to your Eminence a little dialogue between the Queen and M. de Chevreuse, when the latter came to Saint-Germain to escort the Vice-Legate to take leave of their Majesties. The Queen asked the husband for news of his wife. He replied thoughtlessly that she knew much more about her than himself, and told her, in an aggrieved tone, that he had reason to complain very much of her Majesty, since it was she alone who was preventing the return of his wife. The Queen, who is all kindness, was surprised, and told him that he did her a great wrong ; that she loved his wife very much, and that she very much desired to see her, but that she should not counsel her ever to return."

Having therefore definitely decided, as she expressed it in a letter to Boisville, that "it was better to suffer than to perish," on September 16 Madame de Chevreuse wrote to Richelieu, for the last time, assuring him that she was "unable to find words capable of expressing her gratitude for the letter which he had done her the honour to write to her," and regretting that "her mind was incapable of surmounting all at once the apprehensions which troubled it."

And so the negotiations were finally broken off, and Madame de Chevreuse began once more to scheme and plot for the overthrow of her ancient adversary, inflaming the resentment and encouraging the hopes of all the restless *émigrés* whom the arrival of Marie de' Medici had drawn to England, corresponding with Brussels and Madrid, and with the malcontents in France, and raising up everywhere obstacles and perils in Richelieu's path.

## CHAPTER IX

In the early spring of 1640 Madame de Chevreuse decides to remove to Brussels—Reason for this step—Her reception at Brussels—The Duke of Lorraine and Madame de Cantecroix—Madame de Chevreuse urges Charles IV. to come to terms with France—Treaty of April 1641 between France and Lorraine—"God save our lord the Duke and his two wives!"—Conspiracy and revolt of the Comte de Soissons—He sends Alexandre de Campion to Brussels to seek assistance from the Cardinal-Infant—Madame de Chevreuse warmly supports the enterprise—The death of Soissons at the battle of La Marfée puts an end to the revolt—Lorraine again occupied by the French—Question of the participation of Madame de Chevreuse in the conspiracy of Cinq-Mars considered—Anne of Austria, suspected of complicity in the conspiracy, turns against her old favourite, and begs Richelieu not to permit her to return to France—Sad situation of Madame de Chevreuse in the autumn of 1642—Death of Richelieu—Louis XIII. refuses to permit the return of the duchess.

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE remained in England until the early spring of 1640, when she decided to remove herself and her intrigues to Brussels. Several reasons appear to have contributed to this resolve. As, after the rupture of her negotiations with the Cardinal, she had refused to touch the money which he had sent her, she had fallen more deeply into debt than ever, and a financial crisis was imminent. Moreover, she probably perceived that she had outworn her welcome at Whitehall, for, whatever may have been the feelings of the Queen, Charles I. and his Ministers could scarcely regard the continued sojourn in their midst of so notorious an intriguer as other than a menace to their friendly relations with France; and Louis XIII. had already given them a very plain hint on the subject, by complaining that the duchess was accorded

privileges denied to the wife of his Ambassador. Again, the Duc de Chevreuse, who had refused to share his wife's apprehensions in regard to the Cardinal, and who, since the sequestration of her estates, had been in a condition of the most humiliating impecuniosity, had announced his intention of coming to England to compel her to return, and the duchess naturally desired to avoid the embarrassment which this visit might occasion her. Finally, she may well have believed that England scarcely afforded her sufficient scope for the exercise of her talents, and that she could conspire more effectively from a continental asylum.

Accordingly, one fine April day, she embarked for Flanders, carrying with her, it is to be feared, few regrets save from her fellow-refugees ; and Northumberland no doubt expressed the general feeling of the English Court when he wrote to Conway : " Madame de Chevreuse is going away to Flanders. Happy shall we be if a greater loss do never befall this kingdom ! "

A most flattering reception awaited the fair exile on her arrival at Brussels, where the Cardinal-Infant, Governor of the Netherlands, and the Spanish authorities gave several sumptuous fêtes in her honour. She had, too, the pleasure of meeting again Charles IV. of Lorraine, and of making the acquaintance of the beautiful Béatrix de Cusance, Princesse de Cantecroix, whom the Duke had espoused in 1637, notwithstanding the refusal of the Pope to annul his union with the Duchess Nicole. It might be supposed that Béatrix would have been disposed to regard the advent of a lady with whom Charles had once been on such very intimate terms with considerable suspicion ; but, if this were so, Madame de Chevreuse speedily reassured her as to the innocence of her intentions, and they became firm friends. The duchess, as we know, had hitherto exerted her influence to prevent an accommodation between Charles IV. and France, but whether it was

that she was touched by the attentions of Béatrix, or was smitten by remorse on being acquainted with all the misfortunes which the refusal she had prompted were bringing upon the prince and his unhappy country, she now altered her tone and strongly advised her former lover to come to terms with Richelieu.<sup>1</sup> Having persuaded Madame de Cantecroix that the surest means of obtaining the recognition of the marriage she had contracted with the Duke was to secure the goodwill of the Cardinal and the intervention of France at Rome, that lady warmly seconded her efforts, and, in March 1641, Charles, furnished with a safe-conduct from Louis XIII., proceeded to Paris to ask for the restoration of his States. His petition was graciously accorded, on condition that the towns of Stenay, Dun, Jametz, and Clermont should be united to France ; that Nancy should remain in the hands of Louis XIII. until the general peace, when its fortifications should be dismantled ; and that the Duke should do homage to his Majesty for the duchy of Bar, and undertake to assist his suzerain with his troops against all enemies whenever required. The treaty embodying these stipulations was signed on April 2, and, shortly afterwards, Charles, accompanied by Madame de Cantecroix, returned to Lorraine, to be greeted by his loving subjects with cries of : " God save our lord the duke and his two wives ! " "

Singularly enough, while Madame de Chevreuse was urging Charles IV. to be reconciled to France, she was, at the same time, lending her assistance to one of the most formidable insurrections which had menaced the authority of Richelieu.

The Comte de Soissons, who had fled from France at the time of the Conspiracy of Chalais, had been permitted

Comte d'Haussonville, *Histoire de la réunion de la Lorraine à la France.*

Marquis de Beauvais, *Mémoires.*

to return after some years of exile and reinstated in his former charges. To show his appreciation of the royal clemency, he entered into treasonable negotiations with the Spaniards, and it was mainly owing to the worse than half-hearted manner in which he and the Duc d'Orléans acted when in joint command of the Army of Picardy, in the autumn of 1636, that the invaders were able to effect their retreat almost undisturbed.

Soon afterwards, the Count and *Monsieur* formed a plan to assassinate Richelieu at Amiens, which would undoubtedly have succeeded, had not the prince's courage failed him when the moment for its execution arrived. Fearful lest their plot should be discovered, at the close of the campaign *Monsieur* and Soissons both fled, the one to Blois, the other to Sedan, an independent city belonging to the Duc de Bouillon. *Monsieur* was presently induced to accept the pardon that was offered him and return to Court; but Soissons began negotiating with Marie de' Medici and the Spaniards, and only consented to renounce an alliance with them on condition that for four years he should be allowed to remain at Sedan, in the enjoyment of his pensions and revenues, and should not be required to appear at Court (July 1637).

The Duc de Bouillon, an amphibious prince, half-subject, half-sovereign, was as restless and ambitious as his guest, and when the pair were joined by another unquiet spirit, the young Duc Henri de Guise, son of the ex-King of the League, Charles de Guise, who had recently died at Florence, it was evident that there was some very pretty material for conspiracy within the walls of Sedan. The three princes, in fact, were soon in active correspondence with the chief malcontents in France and the French refugees in other countries; nevertheless, it is probable that had Soissons been permitted to remain at Sedan, he might never have taken up arms. But Richelieu was



unable to tolerate on the frontier a party-leader who, in the event of the King's death, would have hastened to snatch the reins of government from the Cardinal's hands ; and in the early spring of 1641, when the period of grace granted to the count was about to expire, he received orders to retire to Venice, and Bouillon was forbidden to harbour him any longer. Both refused to obey, whereupon Soissons's pensions were confiscated, and an army under the Maréchal de Châtillon was despatched into Champagne, to watch Sedan.

The three princes now resolved upon civil war. They summoned from Paris a young abbé, Paul de Gondi, afterwards so famous under the title of Cardinal de Retz, who, although, at this time, only in his twenty-sixth year, had already developed a marked taste for political intrigue, and engaged him to prepare an insurrection in Paris, which was to break out at the first success obtained by the rebel arms ; they obtained a promise from *Monsieur* to put himself at their head, though no dependence could be placed on the word of that pusillanimous prince ; they approached the King's new favourite, the Grand Equerry, Cinq-Mars, who favoured the conspiracy, though he was unwilling to take any active part ; and it would appear that they also secured, at any rate, the good wishes of Anne of Austria, who, notwithstanding that she had now presented the King with two sons, still remained in a kind of semi-disgrace.<sup>1</sup>

Their chief hopes, however, rested upon the assistance of Spain, which would enable them to emerge from Sedan and march upon Paris ; and Soissons despatched to Brussels one of his gentlemen, Alexandre de Campion, to negotiate

<sup>1</sup> The Comte de Soissons's intimate friend Alexandre de Campion wrote to Madame de Chevreuse, some weeks after the count's death : " Have no fear concerning the letters which speak of the *person in the world for whom you have the most devotion*. M. de Bouillon and I have burned all those which were in the count's casket."

with the Spanish Ministers there and obtain from them troops and money.

At Brussels, Campion met Madame de Chevreuse and confided to her the mission with which he was charged. The duchess was naturally ready enough to lend her aid to an enterprise directed against the common enemy, and promised to exert all her influence on his behalf. This she perhaps did the more readily since Campion was a young, handsome, and very gallant gentleman, who wrote sonnets to ladies' eyes in his leisure time ; and it may very well have been that, in the interviews which took place between them, the conversation was not wholly confined to politics. Indeed, Soissons, in one of his letters to Campion, compliments him on the favourable impression which he must have made on the fair lady to cause her to display so much zeal in their interests ; and his envoy, with apparent modesty, disclaims the conquest attributed to him, declaring that he regards divinities of this kind with too much respect and veneration ever to pretend to their favours.

Any way, Madame de Chevreuse laboured indefatigably in the cause of the princes, and it was undoubtedly largely due to her efforts that the Cardinal-Infant was persuaded to promise them money and fourteen thousand men, half of whom were to be furnished by the Emperor and half by Spain, and that the Duc de Lorraine broke the solemn engagements which he had just made with France and remained neutral.

On June 8, Louis XIII. declared Soissons, Guise, and Bouillon enemies of the State, if they did not submit to his authority within a month. Among the misdeeds with which they were charged, was the proposition they had made to *Monsieur*, who, alarmed at the prospect of detection, had denounced it to the King. The princes replied on July 2 by a violent manifesto against the

Cardinal, whom they accused of being the cause of all the evils which were ruining France and troubling all Christendom, and called upon both nobles and people to rise in arms.

The Spaniards in the Netherlands, hard pressed themselves, were unable to send any troops to the assistance of the rebels ; but the Imperialists, to the number of seven thousand men, kept their engagements and joined Soissons and his allies, who had assembled some three thousand French and Walloon volunteers.

The Maréchal de Châtillon, who was vainly waiting for the appearance of the Duke of Lorraine, with whose co-operation he proposed to undertake the blockade of Sedan, made no attempt to prevent this junction, and fell back to cover the road to Paris. The allies at once crossed the Meuse, and, on July 6, the two armies, which were about equal in numbers, met at La Marfée. The French cavalry of the left wing, among whom treachery had been at work, fled almost without striking a blow ; the infantry, demoralised by their example, was seized with panic, and soon the whole of Châtillon's army was scattered in utter rout.

On hearing of this disaster, Louis XIII. and Richelieu, who were in Picardy, hastened with all the troops they could muster towards Paris, where the rising which Gondi had engineered was on the point of breaking out. But it never took place, for on the morrow came a courier with the news that Soissons had fallen in the very hour of his triumph, mysteriously shot after the rout of the French,<sup>1</sup> and the spirit of the rebellion was dead.

Thus once again did Madame de Chevreuse see her hopes vanish away, and soon she had the additional

<sup>1</sup> According to one account, Soissons was imprudently raising the vizor of his helmet with the end of his pistol, when the weapon exploded, and the bullet pierced his brain.

mortification of learning that the French had avenged Charles IV.'s broken faith by again occupying Lorraine, and sending that luckless prince and his Béatrix to resume their wanderings.

No direct evidence exists of the participation of Madame de Chevreuse in the last great conspiracy against the authority of Richelieu—that of *Monsieur*, Cinq-Mars, and the Duc de Bouillon ; but, seeing that it is incontestable that Anne of Austria was implicated in the affair, that the duchess had had relations in the past with the unfortunate François de Thou, who suffered with the Grand Equerry upon the scaffold, and that she was then at Brussels and in frequent communication with Richelieu's enemies at foreign Courts, she must certainly have been in the confidence of the conspirators. That the Cardinal himself had every reason to believe that she was exercising her usual mischievous activity on this occasion is proved by a memoir which he caused to be drawn up at Tarascon in the early days of June 1642, for the information of the King, wherein “that which is written in trustworthy letters concerning Madame de Chevreuse”<sup>1</sup> is mentioned among the most striking indications of the gravity of the situation.

Shortly after the arrest of Cinq-Mars and his accomplices, the relatives of Madame de Chevreuse addressed a very ill-timed petition to the King, praying for the recall of the duchess. One would naturally suppose that Anne of Austria would have seized this opportunity to intercede for her old favourite, but, so far from doing this, her Majesty actually demanded, as a personal favour, that the petition should be refused.

“The Queen,” writes Chavigny to the Cardinal, on July 28, “has earnestly inquired of me if it were true that

<sup>1</sup> *Archives des Affaires étrangères, France* ; Victor Cousin, *Madame de Chevreuse*.

Madame de Chevreuse is returning, and, without awaiting my answer, she explained to me that she would be very grieved at seeing her in France at present ; that she knew her for what she was ; and she ordered me to request his Eminence, on her behalf, that, if he had any desire to do something for Madame de Chevreuse, that it would be without permitting her to return to France. I assured her Majesty that she should be satisfied on this point."

And again, a fortnight later :

"Never have I seen a more true or more sincere satisfaction than that which the Queen has shown on learning what I said on behalf of Monseigneur. She protests that not only is she unwilling for Madame de Chevreuse to approach her, but that she is resolved, for her own safety, to suffer no one to counsel her to do the least thing contrary to her duty."

What is the explanation of Anne's extraordinary conduct ? Why had she suddenly turned against the courageous friend who had shown so much devotion for her ?

The answer is that her situation was once more so full of peril that she was driven to employ all the dissimulation of which her life of intrigue and deceit had made her a past-mistress, to avert the new storm that threatened her, and to persuade the King and Richelieu of her innocence. She had already expressed her unbounded horror of the conspiracy in which she herself had been involved, and had lavished upon the Minister whose ruin she had compassed professions of the most sincere attachment, writing to him with her own hand to inquire after his health, and begging him not to give himself the trouble of replying personally ; and, aware that the King and the Cardinal were bitterly incensed against Madame de Chevreuse and would certainly refuse the petition of her relatives, she had, of course, no

scruples about appearing to desire what she was unable to prevent, and thus affording them a further proof of the injustice of their suspicions.

During the autumn of 1642, the situation of Madame de Chevreuse was truly deplorable. For a long time she had received scarcely anything from France, and was now at the end of her resources, her credit gone and overwhelmed with debt. Everywhere she looked she beheld her great enemy triumphant. He had revealed the Court party in its true colours as an unpatriotic Spanish faction, and all France seemed to be rallying to his side; he was the absolute master of the King; the Queen fawned upon him; *Monsieur* had made the most abject submission; the Queen-Mother was dead; while abroad the French and their allies were everywhere successful, and it seemed as though the House of Austria would soon be driven to a humiliating peace.

At length, the duchess realised the folly of pitting herself against this man, who was never so dangerous as when his ruin seemed assured; whom no force could dismay, no cunning outwit; who became more formidable the oftener he was attacked; who, in a word, was invulnerable.

But this realisation seemed to have come a little too late to be of any service, for she was conscious that she had now offended almost past forgiveness, and no hope remained to her of seeing her country and family again, save by a full confession of her misdeeds and an entire submission to whatever conditions the victorious Cardinal might desire to impose.

Suddenly, in the first days of December, she learned that, at the moment when he had reached the height of his power, Richelieu had succumbed to the one enemy whom he was unable to subjugate. He died

little regretted, save by his family and his immediate followers, for all classes had felt his iron hand, and even the King seems to have experienced a sense of relief that the short span of life which remained to him would be free from that overshadowing presence.

Nevertheless, Louis XIII. had the good sense to realise the immense debt which the Monarchy owed the deceased statesman, and he at once summoned to the head of affairs the man most devoted to the system of Richelieu, whom Richelieu himself had designated as his most fit successor—the Italian diplomatist, Cardinal Mazarin—continued the other Ministers in their respective functions, and announced that he was “resolved to preserve and support all the establishments which we have ordained during his [Richelieu’s] ministry, and to pursue the projects we have formed with him for affairs both within and without our kingdom.”

The news of the Cardinal’s death revived the almost vanished hopes of Madame de Chevreuse and determined her to renew her efforts to return to France. Accordingly, at the end of January 1643, she wrote to her husband, asking him to take steps to prepare the way for her recall. Aware of the delicate situation of Anne of Austria, she counselled him not to seek her Majesty’s intervention, but to address himself directly to the King, now at last his own master :

“I beg you to prepare the way by your own and your friends’ efforts for my return, without even bringing the Queen into the affair, but simply representing that fear alone caused me to leave France, since up to that time I had remained very patiently in Touraine, and should never have quitted it as I did save for that ; that my inclination has always been to esteem the person of the King, and to have more confidence in him than in any one else in the world ; that my misfortune and

the craft of my enemies have at length reduced me to the situation in which I am, but that I shall retain until death the obligation and inclination which I have to honour and serve the King ; that I do not wish to importune him, and that he will do me the favour not to believe anything to the contrary. With which, I shall remain tranquil, being well assured that one day he will understand my true sentiments. You must find means to tell him this, but without pressing anything further, until we see more clearly that the Ministers are favourably disposed."

Gradually, most of those whom Richelieu had banished or imprisoned were recalled or set at liberty. The gates of the Bastille opened for the Maréchaux de Bassompierre and Vitri, the former of whom had expiated his part in the " Day of Dupes " by a captivity of twelve years ; *Monsieur*, exiled to Blois, received permission to return to Court ; the widowed Duchesse de Guise and her children quitted Florence to return to France ; the Duc de Vendôme, who had taken refuge in England, returned to his Château of Anet, and his sons, the Ducs de Beaufort and de Vendôme, reappeared at the Court. But towards Madame de Chevreuse and her imprisoned lover, Châteauneuf, Louis XIII. remained implacable. The King had long held the enterprising duchess in the most profound aversion—in conversation with his intimates he was wont to refer to her as " the devil "—and he regarded the ex-Keeper of the Seals with almost equal fear and dislike ; and, now that he felt the hand of death upon him, he determined to assure the tranquillity of his kingdom after him, by confirming and perpetuating the exile of the one and the imprisonment of the other. Thus, in the royal declaration of April 21, 1643, whereby the dying monarch regulated the government of France during the minority of his



successor, and, sorely against his will, entrusted the regency to "our very dear and well-beloved consort and companion," hampering, however, her authority by a council, without whose consent she could take no step of importance, he caused the following clause to be inserted :

"And, inasmuch as for weighty reasons, important for the welfare of our service, we have been obliged to deprive the *Sieur de Châteauneuf* of the charge of Keeper of the Seals of France, and to cause him to be conducted to the *Château of Angoulême*, where, in accordance with our orders, he has remained up to the present time, we wish and intend that the said *Sieur de Châteauneuf* shall remain in the said *Château of Angoulême* until peace be concluded and executed, provided, notwithstanding, that he may not be set at liberty, save by the order of the said Regent, with the advice of the said council, who shall appoint a place for his retirement within the kingdom or without the kingdom, as shall be judged best. And, as our intention is to provide against every matter which may in any way trouble the good establishment which we are making for the repose and tranquillity of our State, the knowledge that we have of the bad conduct of the *Duchesse de Chevreuse*, and of the artifices which she has employed up to the present time to foment division in our realm, and the factions and the intelligences which she maintains with our enemies without, makes us judge it advisable to forbid, as we have forbidden her, the entry to our realm, so long as the war continues ; desiring also that, after peace be concluded and executed, she may not return into our realm, save by the orders of the said Queen-Regent, with the advice of the said council, provided, nevertheless, that she may not make her residence in any place near the Court or the said Regent."

The Parlement of Paris, without a dissentient voice, obediently registered the decree which declared the two most devoted friends of the Queen separated for ever from her person. But in less than two months from that day Louis XIII. was dead ; the same Parlement had annulled the clauses in his will which limited the power of Anne of Austria and had declared her " Regent without conditions " ; Châteauneuf was a free man once more, and Madame de Chevreuse had returned in triumph to France and to the Court.

## CHAPTER X

Beginning of the regency of Anne of Austria—The "Importants"—The Duc de Beaufort—The Bishop of Beauvais—Different elements of which the opposition to Mazarin is composed—Concessions made by the Cardinal to the malcontents—Return of Madame de Chevreuse—Her promises to her friends at Brussels—Her triumphant journey—Her reception at the Court—She is persuaded that she will easily resume her former ascendancy over the Queen and ruin the credit of Mazarin—But she is soon undeceived—Change in the character of Anne of Austria—Insecurity of Mazarin's position—He determines to gain the affection of the Regent, as the only means of maintaining himself in power—Question of the relations between Anne of Austria and the Cardinal considered—Apprehension with which the latter regards the return of Madame de Chevreuse—He endeavours to prejudice the Queen's mind against her former confidante—But, at the same time, desires to conciliate the duchess—Projects of Madame de Chevreuse—The struggle for supremacy between her and Mazarin one of profound importance for France.

WITH the beginning of the long-anticipated regency of Anne of Austria, it was believed that the hour of triumph for the enemies of Richelieu and his policy had at last arrived. Those whom the iron Cardinal had exiled and imprisoned returned to Court, determined, now that their enemy and the Sovereign whom he had dominated even from the grave were no longer able to thwart their greed and ambition, to possess themselves of the spoils for which they had so long hungered. They thought to find in Anne of Austria another Marie de' Medici, who would reverse the policy of her husband, abandon his Ministers, and hasten to give her confidence to some favourite of her own, or rather, of their choosing. Their hopes were natural. The Regent, a sister of the King of Spain,

must surely, it was believed, desire to come to terms with her brother and put an end to the sanguinary struggle between the country of her birth and that of her adoption. And what in the eyes of a woman could more nobly inaugurate her administration than the giving of peace to an exhausted nation? With the reversal of the late King's policy, would come the fall of the Ministers to whom its continuance had been entrusted, all the more certainly, since the Queen could not but regard them as the creatures of Richelieu, who had persecuted her and exiled her friends. As for the little Italian diplomat whom Louis XIII. had left at the head of the Government, they despised, even more than they hated, him. The news of his reappointment by the Regent to the office conferred upon him by the late King had occasioned them comparatively little uneasiness, since they supposed that her Majesty merely desired to avail herself of his services for a few weeks, until the Duc de Beaufort, or the Bishop of Beauvais, or some other of her particular friends, had acquired sufficient experience of affairs to supersede him. Then he would disappear, as Sully had disappeared, and the council-chamber would know him no more.

So argued the "Importants," as the aristocrats who aspired to control the Government were called, from the importance they ascribed to themselves and the high pretensions which they were at no pains to conceal. They were a formidable party, and exercised a considerable influence at the Court, in the salons, in the Parlement, and in the provinces. At their head was a representative of the great turbulent House of Vendôme, in the person of the Duc de Beaufort, second son of "*César Monsieur*," and Augustin Potier, Bishop of Beauvais, who had long been Grand Almoner to the Queen. Beaufort was a handsome young man of seven-and-twenty, with long golden curls, which were greatly admired by the ladies.

Already the idol of the Parisian populace, he cherished the hope of becoming that of the Regent as well, for, though he was almost young enough to be her Majesty's son, that accident has not always proved an insuperable obstacle to a queen's good graces. Certainly, Anne appeared to regard Beaufort with no little favour, for, shortly before Louis XIII.'s death, she had entrusted her children to his care, and on the day on which that event took place it was to him that she had turned for protection against the crowd of courtiers who had pursued and almost mobbed her; a preference which had led to a violent quarrel between the duke and the Prince de Condé. These marks of confidence had turned Beaufort's head and caused him to conduct himself as though he were already the possessor of the Queen's affections, which was certainly not calculated to further his suit. Moreover, he had not a vestige of political capacity, being arrogant and hot-tempered, with little intelligence and no discretion, and wholly incapable of giving Anne the advice and assistance she required. "M. de Beaufort," writes La Rochefoucauld, "was he who had conceived the greatest hopes; he had been for a long time particularly attached to the Queen. She had just given him a public mark of her esteem, by confiding to him the care of the Dauphin and the Duc d'Anjou, the day that the King [Louis XIII.] received Extreme Unction. The Duc de Beaufort, on his side, made a profitable use of this distinction, and of other advantages, to re-establish his favour by the impression that he sought to convey that it was already established. He was well made in person, tall, adroit, and indefatigable at all bodily exercises, but he was shiftty and inspired little confidence; his mind was dull and badly trained, though he used to attain his ends rather skilfully by his rough ways; his courage was great, but uneven."

The Bishop of Beauvais, who shared with Beaufort the leadership of the party, was a worthy and pious man, and devoted to the interests of the Queen. He had already been made a Minister of State and recommended for a cardinal's hat, and confidently anticipated that he would be elevated to the head of the Cabinet, when the time for getting rid of Mazarin arrived. He was, however, utterly incapable—"Of all the idiots that I have known," says Retz, "he was the most idiotic"<sup>1</sup>—and Anne could not but perceive that such a Prime Minister would make her administration a laughing-stock.

Allied, more or less formally, with Beaufort and Beauvais, were the former's father, the Duc de Vendôme ; the Sieur de Saint-Ibal, the Comte de Montrésor, and the Comte de Bethune ; Châteauneuf, who looked forward to recovering his former office of Keeper of the Seals and to becoming the most influential member of the Ministry ; the brave but erratic Duc de Guise, one of the conspirators of Sedan, and the too-celebrated Duchesse de Montbazou, of whom more anon.

The cabal of the Importants was recruited almost exclusively from a class of experienced conspirators, who, under Mazarin, as under Richelieu, did not cease to attack the Government and to trouble France. But the Opposition party—that is to say, the party hostile to the government of Mazarin and the old Ministers of Louis XIII.—was composed of several elements. By the side of ambitious intriguers, like Beaufort, Guise, and Montrésor, were ranged ecclesiastics of undoubted piety, such as the Bishops of Lisieux and Limoges, Cospéan and La Fayette, who wished to reform the morals of the Court, and whose opposition was more religious than

<sup>1</sup> He had already given a striking proof of his political sagacity by insisting that, if Holland were to continue the ally of France, its people must forthwith become Catholics !

political ; honest but narrow-minded magistrates, such as the Présidents Gayant and Barillon, who demanded, with reason, the diminution of the taxes which weighed so heavily on the people, but who too often rejected the most salutary reforms to maintain the privileges of their profession ; prominent citizens, like Gui Patin ; and a certain number of men and women belonging to the *entourage* of Anne of Austria, among whom were Mlle. de Hautefort, La Porte, and the Chevalier de Jars, devoted to the interests of the Queen, but enemies of Mazarin, whom they regarded as their old persecutor Richelieu come to life again.

In order to pacify the Opposition, Mazarin was compelled to sacrifice to its resentment several persons who had enjoyed the favour of Richelieu. Thus, Madame de Brassac, *dame d'honneur* to the Queen, was dismissed and replaced by Madame de Senécé, one of the victims of the late Cardinal ; Madame de Lansac, *gouvernante* to the young King, was superseded by Châteauneuf's sister, Madame de Vaucelas ; the post of governor of the Bastille was taken away from Du Tremblay, brother of the celebrated Capuchin, Père Joseph (*son Éminence grise*), and given to Saint-Ange, *maître d'hôtel* to the Queen ; while, on June 5, 1643, Claude de Bouthillier, Surintendant des Finances, was disgraced, upon which his son Chavigny tendered his resignation as Secretary of State, which was at once accepted. But these concessions only served to stimulate the hopes of the malcontents ; nothing short of the overthrow of Mazarin and the complete reversal of the policy of his predecessor would suffice to satisfy them.

Such was the situation of affairs when, in the middle of June, Madame de Chevreuse reappeared at the Court, to plunge it once more into "the strife, the disorder, and the misfortunes which were inseparable from the place where the said lady might be."

Madame de Chevreuse had quitted Brussels on June 6, in the firm persuasion that she was returning to the Louvre as a conqueror—a persuasion which appears to have been shared by her friends in Flanders, for whom she promised to accomplish all kinds of marvels. She assured the Archduke Don Ferdinand that the successes of the Duc d'Enghien, who had just gained the brilliant victory of Rocroi over the Spaniards, should be immediately arrested by the proclamation of an armistice, preparatory to the signing of a treaty between France and Spain, with the renunciation on the part of the former of all the pretensions which Richelieu had entertained; she sent a message to Queen Henriette Marie of England, assuring her that the French Government should intervene between Charles I. and his revolted subjects; while the Duke of Lorraine was comforted by a promise of the speedy evacuation of his duchy by the French. When some of the less sanguine of the Archduke's counsellors insinuated that perhaps Anne of Austria might not be so ready to reverse the foreign policy of the late King as she supposed, she laughed their forebodings to scorn, and assured them that she possessed the most absolute ascendancy over the will and affections of the Regent, and would soon show "*il Signor Giulio*," as she contemptuously called Mazarin, who it was who was to govern her Majesty.

Twenty carriages, occupied by persons of the highest rank at the Court of Brussels, accompanied Madame de Chevreuse on the first stage of her journey, as far as Notre-Dame-de-Hau. On the following day, she travelled to Mons, in Hainault, passing through the lines of the Spanish army, which was encamped in the valley of Mons, and being received with military honours by its commander, the Duke of Feria. From Mons, she proceeded, by way of Condé, to Cambrai,



where she arrived on the 9th, "being everywhere worthily received by the chiefs and governors of the country, and by each in his government accompanied up to a league beyond Cambrai."<sup>1</sup> Here she was received by the Maréchal d'Hocquincourt and a grand cavalcade of the provincial *noblesse*, in the midst of whom, sitting in an open carriage, she was escorted to Péronne, of which place Hocquincourt was governor. At Péronne, she was greeted by Alexandre de Campion, whom she had invited to meet her there, to discuss the situation of affairs at the Court of France, and was visited by her first husband's brother, Honoré d'Albert, Duc de Chaulne, the King's lieutenant in Picardy, and his wife, who conveyed her to their château, where she was splendidly entertained. Thence she travelled to Roye, where she found La Rochefoucauld and her old admirer Walter Montagu,<sup>2</sup> the former having been sent to welcome her in the name of the Queen, and the latter in that of Mazarin; and on June 13 she arrived at the Château of Versine, a house belonging to the Sieur de Saint-Simon, uncle of the future historian, where the Duc de Chevreuse was awaiting her. The following day, she reached Paris, ten years after she had left it, "during which absence," observes the *Gazette* of Renaudot, the *Moniteur* of the time, "this princess has caused us to see what an excellent disposition is capable of, despite all the reverses of Fortune which her constancy has surmounted."

And the same journal proceeds: "She went on the instant to salute their Majesties, on which visit she

<sup>1</sup> *Gazette*, June 20, 1643.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Montagu, who, some years before, had embraced the Catholic religion and become very devout, had, in 1641, been summoned before the House of Commons to answer for having collected contributions from his co-religionists for the support of the royal army, in consequence of which he was obliged to leave England.

received so many tokens of the affection of the Queen, and rendered her also so many proofs of her zeal in all that concerns her service, and so much resignation to her wishes, that it is very plain that neither length of time, nor distance, nor the thorns of affairs, are able to make any impression, save upon vulgar souls. Also, the grand *cortège* of this Court, which visits her continually, and which renders her very spacious hôtel too small, does not transport every one with admiration so much as the remark that has been made that neither the fatigues of her long journeys, nor the effects of this harsh fortune, have wrought any change in her natural magnanimity, nor, what is the more extraordinary, in her beauty."

At the time of her return to Paris, Madame de Chevreuse was in her forty-fourth year. Her beauty, contrary to what the *Gazette* alleges, was beginning to decline, and, with it, her taste for gallantry, but, unhappily, her passion for political intrigue was stronger than ever. During her years of exile she had met and been on terms of intimacy with the most celebrated statesmen of Europe, and had acquired a knowledge of the strength and weakness of different Governments and a political experience which in all probability no woman of her time possessed. And this knowledge and experience she was resolved to turn to profitable account, now that the doors of France were once more open to her. Campion, La Rochefoucauld, and Montagu had all warned her that the power of Mazarin rested on more solid bases than most persons seemed to imagine, and that the Queen was becoming more and more favourably disposed towards him; and the last had counselled her to accept the offers of friendship which he had been commissioned by the Cardinal to make her, and to live on amicable terms with the new Minister. Madame de Chevreuse appeared inclined to listen to them; but, welcomed by the Queen as an old

and cherished friend, she persuaded herself that it would be an easy matter to resume over that princess her former ascendancy, and that she would soon succeed in ruining the credit of Mazarin. For, in her pride and arrogance, it seemed to her incredible that an obscure foreigner, who appeared to be without support either at the Court or in the country, would be able to maintain his position against the celebrated Duchesse de Chevreuse, sustained by all that was illustrious and powerful in France; who could count upon *Monsieur*, governed as he was by his second wife, Marguerite de Lorraine, sister of Charles IV.; upon the great families of Vendôme and Lorraine and Rohan; upon the Bouillons and the La Rochefoucaulds; upon sirens like Madame de Montbazon and Madame de Guyméné, her step-mother and sister-in-law, and their numerous train of adorers, new and old; and upon intimate friends of the Queen, like Mlle. de Hautefort, and Madame de Senécé, Jars, and La Porte.

But the duchess was deceived. She did not know Mazarin, who had not entered the service of France until after she had quitted the kingdom, and, in point of fact, few even of those who were best acquainted with him had as yet penetrated the character of that adroit and resourceful personage. Neither did she know Anne of Austria, or, rather, she knew only the unloved consort of Louis XIII., and not the mother of Louis XIV. and the Regent of France.

For the Anne of Austria of 1643 was no longer the vain and rather foolish princess, who, wounded by the coldness and neglect of her husband, deprived of all influence, and kept in a sort of permanent disgrace by Louis XIII. and Richelieu, had revenged herself by encouraging the presumptuous passion of Buckingham, carrying on a secret but persistent opposition to the government of the great Cardinal, and even engaging in

enterprises which might well have brought about her repudiation by the King and her banishment from France. With increasing years had come prudence and the desire for a tranquil life, and with the possession of the regency, which she owed partly to her skilful efforts to disarm the resentment of her husband during the last months of his life, and partly to the services which Mazarin had rendered her, a sense of responsibility—of the duty which she owed to the son in whose name she ruled and of the nation whose destinies were committed to her care.

“The glory of Anne of Austria, in posterity,” writes Victor Cousin, in his monograph on Madame de Hautefort, “is that, having arrived at supreme power, dragging after her fifteen years of misfortunes and persecutions, of bitter and profound resentments, with a crowd of friends who, for her sake, had braved death, exile, and imprisonment, she did not hesitate to recognise that the interests of France, of her son, and of royalty exacted from her the sacrifice of her friendships and her hatreds and of all her old engagements. She seemed destined, in 1643, to become another Marie de’ Medici. It was the party of the Queen-Mother who had fought for her, and, after having shared her disgrace, it counted confidently on sharing her influence. The policy of this party was, without, peace, alliance with Spain, and the abandonment of the Protestant alliance; within, the re-establishment of the anarchical authority of the princes and the great families, the domination of the bishops under the cloak of religion, and that of the Parlements under that of liberty; in a word, the return to the order of things to which Louis XIII. and Richelieu had undertaken to put an end. Queen Anne required an intelligence and a firmness very uncommon to separate herself from those who up to this time had faithfully served her, and to embrace the policy of him who had so persecuted her.”

This great change, however, took place almost insensibly, and without Anne herself being at first more than barely conscious of it; nor was it until after weeks of uncertainty that it was finally accomplished, thanks to the talents of the new Prime Minister and the sentiments with which he had succeeded in inspiring the Regent.

On the death of Louis XIII., Mazarin's position in France was a most precarious one, surrounded as he was by enemies eager to undo the work of the last reign, and regarded by the bulk of the nation with dislike and suspicion, on account of his foreign birth. To the powerful faction arrayed against him, he could, of course, oppose the old partisans of Richelieu, particularly the Condés and the families connected with them by marriage or friendship. But his *Carnets* show how little reliance he was inclined to place on the support of the Prince de Condé, whose defection would leave him with only such allies as had everything to gain and nothing to lose by a change of Ministers. There was but one road to safety: to secure the unequivocal favour of the Queen; not only her confidence, for that would avail him little if his enemy Beaufort possessed her affections, but her heart as well ("When one has the heart, one has everything," he wrote, many years later); and to this end all his energies were henceforth directed.

Anne was naturally indolent and anxious for some one to relieve her of the burden of affairs, and Mazarin's ability, experience, and industry were invaluable to her. Moreover, she found it infinitely more pleasant to transact business with the handsome and insinuating Italian cardinal, who, like herself, was a stranger in a foreign land, who talked to her in the tongue of her childhood, made her such pretty speeches, and professed so much devotion to her interests and to those of her infant son,

than with the "Importants," who wearied her by their constant demands and their domineering ways.

The Queen was now in her forty-third year, but she was still beautiful and still very coquettish, in a romantic and strictly decorous manner, attaching great importance to high-flown compliments, languishing looks, and delicate little attentions. Mazarin lavished them upon her. He placed himself at her feet to reach her heart. He pretended to be madly in love, and yet overwhelmed by the sense of his own unworthiness. He had nothing, he said, but his devotion to plead for him; he was more lowly than the grass before his goddess. He succeeded, as we know, and succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, and, once master of Anne's heart, he easily directed her mind, and maintained his ascendancy over both until the day of her death.

What precisely were the relations between the Queen and Mazarin has been much debated. According to a curious anecdote which Brienne relates in his *Mémoires*, Anne herself solemnly protested that the Cardinal's attraction for her was of a purely intellectual order.

One day, Madame de Brienne, wife of the Secretary of State, was in the Queen's oratory, when Anne entered, her beads in her hand, plunged in a profound reverie: "Let us pray together," said she, "we shall be the better heard." As they rose from their devotions, Madame de Brienne craved permission to speak to the Queen, in regard to her Majesty's relations with the Cardinal. Anne consented, and was accordingly informed of all that malicious tongues were saying. The Queen blushed and tears filled her eyes. "Why have you not told me this before?" said she. "I confess that I am attached to him—I can even say tenderly; but my affection does not go so far as love, or, if it does, I am not aware of it.

My senses have no part ; only my mind is charmed by the beauty of his intellect. If this be wrong, I will renounce it before God and the saints. I will speak to him no more save of the affairs of State, and check him when he speaks of anything else." Madame de Brienne then asked the Queen to swear on some relics of the saints which were in the oratory that "she would never abandon what she had promised God"—a request with which her Majesty complied readily enough. "God's goodness," said the pious confidante, "will soon make your innocence known."

"Anne, however, had taken oaths before," observes Mazarin's able American biographer, Mr. J. B. Perkins, "and the remembrance of the Val-de-Grâce makes us doubtful whether simple admiration for beauty of mind could have withstood the shock of circumstances and survived the lapse of years."<sup>1</sup>

The Queen, indeed, must needs be regarded as an extraordinary woman, one of the loftiest souls who ever occupied a throne, if all the constancy she displayed, all the sacrifices to which she submitted, in after years, rather than abandon Mazarin, are to be ascribed merely to the fact that she had discerned in this detested and despised foreigner a man of misunderstood genius, the only one capable of preserving her son's crown and of maintaining France in the rank which belonged to her in Europe, and not to a private sentiment, the great motive and the great explanation of the conduct of women.

Moreover, the tone of the Queen's letters to the Cardinal is strangely inconsistent with her protestations to Madame de Brienne. During Mazarin's second exile, in 1652, Anne concludes one of her letters with this passionate cry : "15 [the Queen] is a thousand times [yours] until the last sigh. Adieu, I can wait no more, and he

<sup>1</sup> "France under Richelieu and Mazarin."



CARDINAL MAZARIN  
AFTER THE PAINTING BY MIGNARD





[Mazarin] knows why.”<sup>1</sup> And again, some months later, when the Cardinal was with the Army, she writes : “I cannot but tell you that I think the sight of those one loves is not unpleasant, even if it be but for a few hours. I fear that your fondness for the Army will be greater than all others. Still, I pray you to believe that I shall be always what I should be, come what will.” The years bring no change in the warmth of these epistles. “Your letter,” she writes in June 1660, “has given me great joy. If I had believed that one of my letters would have thus pleased you, I would have written it gladly. To see the pleasure with which it was received makes me recall another time, which, indeed, I do recall almost every minute. Though you may doubt it, if I could make you see my heart as well as what I say on this paper, you would be satisfied, or you would be the most ungrateful man in this world ; and I do not believe you are that.”

The letters of Mazarin are in the same tone. “*Mon Dieu !* How happy I should be and you satisfied,” he writes from Brühl in May 1651, “if you could see my heart, or if I could write what is in it ! You would not find it difficult, in that case, to agree that never was there a friendship approaching that which I entertain for you. I confess to you that I little imagined that it would go so far as to deprive me of all contentment when my time is employed in anything else than in thinking of you. I wish, also, that I had the power to express my hatred for those indiscreet persons who labour without

<sup>1</sup> In their private correspondence the Queen and Mazarin employed certain signs or ciphers, of which the key still exists. The numbers 15, 22, and 24 indicate the Queen ; the numbers 16, 26, and 46 indicate Mazarin. The Queen is likewise designated under the names of *Séraphin* and *Ange*, and Mazarin under those of *le Ciel* and *la Mer*. Frequently, in his letters, Mazarin speaks of himself as a third person, to deceive any one into whose hands the letters might fall.

ceasing to make you forget me and to hinder us from meeting again : in a word, it is proportioned to the friendship that I bear you. They are mistaken if they hope to see in us the effects of absence ; and, if that Spaniard said that the mountains of the Guadarrama have great difficulty in dividing two good friends . . .

“ Write to me, I entreat you, and say if I shall see you, and when ; *for this state of things cannot last, even should I perish.* The greatest enemy in the world I should love as my own life, and with all my heart, if he could contrive so that I might see *Séraphin* [the Queen] again.”

It has frequently been claimed that the Queen and the Cardinal were secretly married. Those who hold this view, of course, start with the assumption that Mazarin was in minor Orders, and would therefore have been free to marry had he been so disposed. This was certainly the opinion of his contemporaries, and the Abbé de Laffemas, in a rhyming letter which he addressed to the Cardinal in 1649, says :

Vous êtes un grand cardinal,  
Un homme de haute entreprise,  
Vingt fois abbé, homme de l'église,  
Quoique ne soyez *in sacris*.<sup>1</sup>

That Mazarin was only a lay Cardinal at this time, and for at least two years afterwards, is, we think, clearly proved by a letter which Chéruel cites in his *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV.* This letter, addressed to one of his confidants, Elphideo Benedetti, was written when Mazarin was in exile at Brühl in 1651, and had some thought of visiting Rome. “ As for the difficulty created by the Bull which deals with those not in Orders, one ought,” he writes, “ to consider the

<sup>1</sup> Published by Amédée Renée, *les Nidces de Mazarin*.

deprivation of the right of voting in the Conclave, and, in regard to that, I should desire to know whether, *in the event of my taking Holy Orders*, I should have the right of voting without any other dispensation being necessary."

But, if Mazarin were in minor Orders in 1651, he was certainly in full Orders in 1656, at the time of the death of his niece, the Duchesse de Mercœur, the eldest of the famous Mancini sisters ; for we read in the valuable but little-known *Mémoires* of Daniel de Cosnac, afterwards Archbishop of Aix, a great friend of the duchess, who was present during her last hours :

"At noon on the morrow, I came to the Hôtel de Vendôme. As I was mounting the steps, I was told that Madame was very ill. The doctors maintained that her life was in no danger. . . . But she was overtaken by such drowsiness that they began to fear that her brain was affected. . . . In the evening, the doctors began to change their tone. *The Cardinal [Mazarin] came himself to administer the Sacraments.*"

But neither as a lay-cardinal, nor as a cardinal-priest, would Mazarin have been able to contract a marriage without a special dispensation, and such a dispensation had never been granted, except on the condition of the intending Benedict resigning his membership of the Sacred College. If, as M. Loiseleur has pointed out in his *Problèmes historiques*, the Holy See, in defiance of all ecclesiastical usage, had accorded Mazarin permission to marry and still to retain the external apparel of his former dignity, the dispensation must have been granted either by Urban VIII., who died July 28, 1644, or by Innocent X., who succeeded and lived till 1655. But it could hardly have been by Urban, he says, for we know, from a report of Mazarin's secret police, that, towards the end of October 1643, three nuns of the Val-de-Grâce took upon themselves to send her Majesty a vigorously-worded

remonstrance on the subject of her relations with the Cardinal—a remonstrance which would have been entirely purposeless if, at this period, these relations had been legitimated by marriage. “Nor is that all. Certain notes of the Cardinal’s fourth *Carnet*, which comprises the end of the year 1643 and the beginning of 1644, and other notes of the fifth *Carnet*, which extends down to August 28 of the latter year, show us that about the time of the death of Urban VIII. the convents were still inveighing against Mazarin, influenced principally by his scandalous relations with the Queen, a fact which is inexplicable, supposing that a dispensation had been granted by the Pope ; for the Queen, who had no secrets from her good friends of the Val-de-Grâce, would not have failed to close their mouths, by communicating to them the dispensation, if it had existed ; and Père Vincent, to whom was attributed the celebration of the marriage, would not have found himself included in the recriminations consigned to the famous *Carnets*.”

“As for Innocent X.,” continues M. Loiseleur, “he remained throughout his pontificate the bitter and persistent enemy of Mazarin, and no one in Europe was less likely to go out of his way to do the Cardinal a favour.”

This would seem to us to render a marriage between the Cardinal and Anne of Austria extremely improbable, though it is just conceivable, as more than one writer has suggested, that Mazarin may have intimidated Innocent X., by the threat of the annexation of Avignon, into granting the necessary dispensation, and also into maintaining silence in regard to it.

But we must return to the early summer of 1643, when Madame de Chevreuse had just reappeared upon the scene, and when Mazarin’s fate was still trembling in the balance, for, as we have said, it was not until after weeks of uncertainty that he permanently gained the

favour of Anne of Austria, not only through her head, but through her heart, and the Regent was persuaded to abandon those to whom she was bound by so many ties.

Mazarin's *Carnets* show the profound apprehension with which he regarded the return of Madame de Chevreuse to the Court. "*Il Rosso* [the Prince de Condé] believes that Madame de Chevreuse will effect a special treaty between the two crowns [France and Spain], to the exclusion of all others," he writes at the beginning of June. "The cabal is aiming against me."

He had taken advantage of the interval between the death of Louis XIII. and the return of the duchess to do everything in his power to prejudice the Queen's mind against her former confidante. In this task he found a valuable ally in *Madame la Princesse*, one of the Queen's most intimate friends, who had always detested Madame de Chevreuse ; and their joint efforts proved so successful that Anne had only consented to the duchess's return to Court with extreme reluctance, and perhaps would have refused to do so, had not the incessant clamour of the "Importants" obliged her either to yield to their solicitations or to break with them altogether.

"When Madame de Chevreuse arrived," relates Madame de Motteville, "the Queen seemed to show joy at her return and treated her rather well. Nevertheless, I perceived that our new Minister had done his utmost to make the Queen dislike her and understand her faults. *Madame la Princesse* likewise hated Madame de Chevreuse ; and, since the humour of the said princess resembled that of the duchess, she also had done everything in her power to disgust her Majesty. The Duchesse de Chevreuse, therefore, did not find the Queen the person whom she had left ; while the Queen, on her side, sought in vain in Madame de Chevreuse the quali-

ties and graces which once had captivated her imagination. Our Sovereign had become devout and serious ; the former favourite still clung to the same flighty vanity and coquettish demeanour, which, to say the least, are indecorous adjuncts of middle-age. Her rivals in the Queen's favour asserted that the duchess intended to govern and override every personage of the Court ; so that the Queen dreaded her return, and was even very disinclined to sanction her presence in Paris."

But, while Mazarin was thus endeavouring to injure Madame de Chevreuse in the mind of the Queen, he showed every disposition to conciliate so redoubtable an adversary. Thus, very shortly after the duchess's return to Paris, he persuaded Anne to make her a present of 50,000 livres, and, a little later, as the result apparently of a conversation between him and the lady, in which she had assured him that "without interest there could be no friendship," a further *gratification* of 200,000 livres was accorded her.<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Chevreuse graciously condescended to accept the money, but what she desired above everything was power. She had loftier ambitions, more decided views, and a more tenacious will than the majority of the "Importants," with whom she had immediately allied herself and whose real leader she was speedily to become. She aspired to obtain for herself and her party a strong and independent position in the State, by means of important governments and places of surety—an *imperium in imperio*, so to speak ; she intended to dominate the Council, by placing there her old lover Châteauneuf, and, with him, to change the whole foreign policy of France, to renounce the alliance with the Protestants, to effect a reconciliation with the House of Austria, and to employ their united forces to quell the Puritan revolution in

<sup>1</sup> *Deuxième carnet.*

England and to restore Charles I. to absolute power. The sagacity of Mazarin soon enabled him to penetrate these designs, and he lost no time in taking measures to checkmate them. "This struggle between a woman haughty and passionate and a Minister shrewd, capable, and dissembling," writes Chéruel, "belongs to history. "It was not merely a question of feminine intrigues and of a struggle for power ; the future of France was at stake. Would she continue to follow the glorious policy of Richelieu, or would she fall again, as at the epoch of the regency of Marie de' Medici, under Spanish influence ? Such was the question which was about to be decided." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV.*



## CHAPTER XI

Madame de Chevreuse works secretly to undermine the position of Mazarin—Her demands on behalf of Châteauneuf, the Vendômes, and La Rochefoucauld cleverly checkmated by the Cardinal—Failure of the duchess's project to bring about a combination of the Houses of Vendôme, Lorraine, and Rohan against the Cardinal by a double marriage—Growing irritation of Madame de Chevreuse against Mazarin—Her efforts to induce Anne of Austria to conclude a separate peace with Spain defeated—The struggle for supremacy between the duchess and the Minister gradually develops into open war—Madame de Chevreuse avails herself of the assistance of the devout party to separate the Queen from Mazarin—Intervention of Mlle. de Hautefort, Père Vincent [St. Vincent de Paul], the abbesses of the Val-de-Grâce and the Carmelites, and other saintly persons—Singular conversation between Anne of Austria and La Porte—Impertinent letter placed by La Porte in her Majesty's bed—The Cardinal persuades the Queen that the scandalous rumours as to their relations are the work of Madame de Chevreuse and the "Importants."

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE opened her campaign by proposing the return of Châteauneuf. "His good sense and his long experience," writes La Rochefoucauld, "were known to the Queen; he had suffered a rigorous imprisonment for having espoused her interests. He was firm, decided; he loved the State, and he was more capable than any one else of re-establishing the ancient forms of government which the Cardinal de Richelieu had begun to destroy. He was most intimately attached to Madame de Chevreuse, who knew well enough the most certain means of governing him. She therefore demanded his return with much insistence."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

Châteauneuf had already been permitted to exchange the citadel of Angoulême, where he had passed ten years in captivity, for one of his country-houses, situated at a distance from the capital. Madame de Chevreuse demanded the termination of this modified form of exile and the recall of the man who had suffered so much for the Queen and for her.

Mazarin was well aware that the ex-Keeper of the Seals was his most dangerous rival, as he was the only tried statesman whom his enemies could oppose to the Ministers of the late King, and that his recall would immediately be followed by a demand that he should be re-established in his former office, or, at any rate, given a place in the Council. Since, however, the demand of Madame de Chevreuse was supported by the entire Opposition party, he comprehended the necessity of surrender, but he did so only partially, declaring that, though he himself recognised its justice, it was necessary to spare the susceptibilities of the Condé family, and particularly of *Madame la Princesse*, who had never forgiven Châteauneuf for having presided over the tribunal which, in 1632, had condemned her brother, the ill-fated Henri de Montmorency, to a traitor's death, and who would be mortally offended if the ex-Minister were so soon restored to favour. Châteauneuf was therefore permitted to establish himself at his country-seat of Montrouge, near Paris, on the understanding that he was not to appear at Court until further orders from the Regent.

If, however, Châteauneuf was not allowed to visit the Court, the whole Court went to visit him, and, encouraged by their demonstration of sympathy, he professed to regard himself as already Chancellor of France, on the ground that, on the death of the Chancellor d'Aligre in 1635, Pierre Séguier had been invested with

this office illegally, and he even went so far as to surround himself with the same insignia as Séguier. "People called them the two 'Sosii,'" writes Oliver d'Ormesson, "because they both had the tapestry and the robe of Chancellor, were of the same build, very swarthy, and both of a very stern countenance." The Queen, too, showed herself very favourably disposed towards Châteauneuf, and it was the general belief that the Seals would shortly be taken away from Séguier and given to him. "Every one speaks of the ruin of the Chancellor Séguier," writes Mazarin in his secret notes; and, indeed, there seemed to be every prospect of it, for not only was it known to be a point of honour with Madame de Chevreuse to secure for Châteauneuf the office which he had lost for her sake, but the Chancellor was one of the most compromised of Richelieu's creatures and the object of the most violent dislike. His conduct in the trial of de Thou, whom he had caused to be condemned to death by resuscitating an ancient statute which declared those who, having knowledge of treasonable dealings, failed to denounce them, themselves guilty of high treason, had rendered him particularly odious, and from all quarters came the demand for his dismissal.

Séguier, however, escaped the disgrace which appeared so inevitable. In the first place, those who desired his fall were unable to agree upon his successor, for, although Châteauneuf was the candidate of Madame de Chevreuse and the majority of the "Importants," the Bishop of Beauvais, who aspired to the post of Prime Minister, feared to have in the Cabinet a colleague whose capacity was undeniable, and who was certain to become a formidable rival; while the Président Bailleul, who shared the direction of the finances with the Comte d'Avaux, coveted the Seals for himself. Then, the Chancellor had a sister, Mère Jeanne, Abbess of the Carmelites of Pontoise, who

had considerable influence with the Queen, and made use of it to plead for her brother ; and the now devout Walter Montagu, very devoted to Mère Jeanne and high in favour with her Majesty, likewise defended the threatened Minister. Finally, we must not forget the service which Séguier is believed to have rendered the Queen at the time of the affair of the Val-de-Grâce, and the recollection of which would have made Anne of Austria most reluctant to consent to dismiss the Chancellor.<sup>1</sup>

When Madame de Chevreuse perceived that it would be almost impossible to oust Séguier, she took another road to arrive at her end. The Comte d'Avaux, being about to set out for the Congress of Münster, as one of the plenipotentiaries of France, it was necessary to give the Président Bailleul a new auxiliary in the direction of the finances, as that learned gentleman's incapacity was a matter of common knowledge. The duchess accordingly proposed to the Queen that Châteauneuf should be introduced into the Council as successor to d'Avaux—a modest position which could not possibly give umbrage to Mazarin—being well aware that, once in the Cabinet, the former Keeper of the Seals would soon push his way to the foremost place. Mazarin, however, understood the significance of this manœuvre, and hastened to check-mate it. He had already decided to regard the return of Châteauneuf to office as an indication of the expediency of his own departure from France, and he represented to the Queen, through one of her confidants, Beringhen, that the entry of the ex-Minister to the Council would oblige him to tender his resignation.

It was a bold move, for, as we have seen, he was as yet very far from sure of the Queen ; but it succeeded.

<sup>1</sup> This point has, singularly enough, been overlooked by Cousin, Chéruel, and nearly all the leading authorities on this period.

Anne had already had abundant proof of the capacity of the Cardinal, and knew that his services could not be dispensed with at this juncture. She knew, too, that he was not attached to any faction, while Châteauneuf was supported by an insolent cabal greedy of honours, of riches, and of power, and that, in accepting him, she would be submitting to the domination of this party, of which Madame de Chevreuse was the soul. Besides, the elevation of Châteauneuf would, for the reason already mentioned, have alienated the Condés; and it would have been most imprudent to offend them in the midst of the brilliant successes of Enghien.

Lastly, Châteauneuf, like Madame de Chevreuse, was an avowed partisan of a separate treaty with Spain, and had even told d'Avaux that it would be more advisable for him, when he reached Münster, to make peace with his Catholic Majesty, instead of engaging in complicated negotiations for a general treaty; and the Ambassadors of the Powers allied with France intimated that they should regard his entrance into the Cabinet with the most profound suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

And so Châteauneuf was passed over, and d'Émeri, a *protégé* of Mazarin, was associated with Bailleul, whom subsequently he replaced altogether.

While thus pushing the claims of the man upon whose return to power her chief hopes reposed, Madame de Chevreuse, although she did not venture to attack Mazarin directly, was steadily mining the ground about the Minister and preparing his ruin. Her practised eye had easily enabled her to recognise that a powerful weapon lay ready to her hand in the hatred with which the memory of Richelieu was regarded by the majority of the nation. All classes had felt the weight of that iron hand: the great nobles, who had seen themselves

<sup>1</sup> Chéruel, *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV.*

or their relatives proscribed and despoiled ; the Church, too firmly controlled not to believe itself oppressed ; the Parlement, whose claws the late Cardinal—to borrow his own expression—had cut close, by strictly confining it to its judicial functions ; the people, ground down by the oppressive taxation which the wars had necessitated. Even the Regent had not forgotten the profound humiliations which Richelieu had inflicted upon her and the fate which she might have suffered at his hands. Richelieu himself had passed beyond reach of their vengeance, but the relatives and *protégés* whom he had raised from obscurity to honours and riches remained, and it was against them that public resentment was directed. Madame de Chevreuse made it her business to foment this resentment, and so skilfully did she go to work that the demand that the Cardinal's creatures should make way for those whom they had dispossessed became daily more insistent.

Madame de Chevreuse then petitioned the Queen to repair the long misfortunes of the Vendômes by bestowing upon them the Admiralty, to which was attached the governments of La Rochelle and Brouage and the government of Brittany, of which the chief of the family, César de Vendôme, had been deprived after the Conspiracy of Chalais. Thus, she would, at one stroke, aggrandize a friendly family and assure herself of an asylum in case of reverses, and despoil two Houses which had been among the most faithful adherents of Richelieu, and whose support might prove of the greatest value to his successor. The Admiralty had been given by Richelieu to his nephew, Armand de Maillé, Duc de Brézé, son of the Maréchal de Brézé, governor of Anjou, and brother of the Duchesse d'Enghien, who, notwithstanding his youth, was regarded as one of the best seamen of his time ; while the government of

Brittany was held by the Maréchal de la Meilleraie, Grand Master of the Artillery, an excellent soldier and in possession of several regiments.

The Bishop of Beauvais joined Madame de Chevreuse in pressing upon the Queen the claims of the Vendômes, and in urging her to satisfy the public demand for the disgrace of the relatives and creatures of Richelieu, and, notwithstanding the efforts of Mazarin, Anne appeared to be on the point of yielding. "She has said to Rosso [the Prince de Condé], who has repeated it to me," writes Mazarin, "that people are insisting on her taking steps against the Cardinal's relatives, and that she replied that she would think about it. It appears from this that the Queen does not trust me, since she does not disclose to me her intentions when I question her on this matter."<sup>1</sup>

Mazarin was almost in despair when his police brought him some most startling intelligence. It was to the effect that Madame de Chevreuse was in treaty with Madame d'Asserac for the purchase of the Île Dieu, an island off the coast of Brittany, and that she intended to instal there her devoted partisan Alexandre de Campion and his brother Henri. She would thus have at her disposal a port into which she could admit the Spaniards, and, in concert with the Vendômes, masters of Brittany and the fleet, would be able to stir up a civil war and impose her wishes on the Regent.<sup>2</sup>

Armed with this information, the Cardinal went to the Queen and represented to her that she would be weakening the authority of the Crown and running the risk of civil war, if she yielded to the demands of Madame de Chevreuse and delivered an important province

<sup>1</sup> *Deuxième carnet.*

<sup>2</sup> This project was almost identical with that formed by Nicolas Fouquet, Surintendant des Finances, in 1661. This same Madame d'Asserac was one of the accomplices of the *Surintendant*, who intended to employ her to raise an insurrection in Brittany.

and the maritime forces of France to a family which had been engaged in so many plots against the State. Anne comprehended the danger of the situation and agreed to refuse the demand for the Admiralty, for which decision the opposition of the Condés to the spoliation of a family so closely connected with them by marriage furnished her with an excellent pretext. But it was far more difficult to maintain La Meilleraie in Brittany, in the face of the protests of a son of Henry IV., who had formerly possessed it and who demanded it back as a kind of family property. Mazarin, however, proposed a way out of the difficulty, which the Queen hastened to accept. It was that Anne should take for herself the government of Brittany, and leave La Meilleraie there as her lieutenant-general, a title which would, of course, be beneath the dignity of Princes of the Blood, like the Vendômes, to accept, though any less exalted personage could not be offended at being the deputy of the Queen. La Meilleraie accordingly was summoned to Paris, where he had several interviews with the Queen and the Cardinal, as the result of which it was arranged that Anne should have the nominal government of Brittany, but that the real authority should still be vested in the marshal. Shortly afterwards, La Meilleraie was rewarded for his complaisance by the title of duke, which the late King had promised him, and the reversion of the Grand Mastership of the Artillery for his son, that eccentric being who, seventeen years later, was to become the husband of the Cardinal's favourite niece, the beautiful Hortense Mancini, and to assume the title of Duc de Mazarin.<sup>1</sup> Thus, once again Madame de Chevreuse found herself skilfully checkmated.

<sup>1</sup> On the eccentricities of Armand de la Porte, Duc de Mazarin, see the author's "Five Fair Sisters" (London, Hutchinson ; New York, Putnam, 1906), pp. 262 *et seq.*



The duchess, however, hoped to repair, in part at least, this reverse by success in another direction. The late Cardinal had bequeathed his duchy of Richelieu and many other possessions to his grand-nephew, Armand de Vignerot, a boy of eleven ; and Louis XIII. had given the little duke the government of Le Havre, which was to be held in trust for him by his aunt, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, until he was old enough to assume it himself. Madame de Chevreuse now demanded that Le Havre should be given to La Rochefoucauld, pointing out that the Queen would thus be suitably recompensing one who had rendered both her Majesty and herself important services, without inflicting any hardship upon the young Duc de Richelieu, who had not yet entered into possession of his charge. She might have added that the Queen would be at the same time depriving a person upon whose support Mazarin was able to count of the command of one of the most important harbours of France, and of delivering it into the hands of an ambitious intriguer, hand in glove with herself, who would have had not the smallest scruple in betraying it to the Spaniards, if he believed that his interests could be served thereby.

Once more Anne appeared to be on the point of surrendering to the persuasions of her former confidante, and once more the adroitness of Mazarin parried the blow which was aimed at him. This time, however, he did not intervene personally, but sent for the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and carefully indicated to her the course which she must pursue in order to preserve her nephew's government from the clutches of Madame de Chevreuse and La Rochefoucauld.

Now, there had been a time when the Queen had detested the Duchesse d'Aiguillon ; indeed, in the days when that lady had been "*la veuve Combalet*," she had

even suspected, or professed to suspect, Richelieu of plotting her own repudiation by Louis XIII., in order to marry his niece to the King ; and the passing of the years, though it had tempered this sentiment, had by no means effaced it—a fact which, we may be sure, Madame de Chevreuse had not failed to take into account. Anne, however, was not without generosity, and when the duchess, who had formerly repaid her Majesty's dislike by the coldness and haughtiness of her demeanour, presented herself before her as the humblest of suppliants, and, with tears in her eyes, besought her not to inflict what would be universally regarded as a disgrace upon the innocent relatives of the late Cardinal, she was touched with compassion. Madame d'Aiguillon, perceiving her advantage, then began to employ the arguments with which Mazarin had furnished her, and told the Queen that "it was necessary for her service that she should leave an important place like Havre in her hands ; that, having none but enemies in France, she (the duchess) was unable to find any safety or refuge save in the protection of her Majesty, who would always be mistress of it ; that, on the contrary, he to whom she intended to give this government had too much ability, that he was capable of ambitious designs, and might, upon the least mortification, throw in his lot with some party, and that it was therefore important for the good of her Majesty's service that she should hold this place for the King."<sup>1</sup>

These representations were not without their effect upon the Queen, and, after consultation with Mazarin, who naturally approved the arguments which he had himself suggested to Madame d'Aiguillon, "she thought fit to leave matters in the state in which they were."

Madame de Chevreuse was no more successful in her next move, which was to bring about a combination of

<sup>1</sup> Motteville,

some of the greatest families in France against Mazarin, by marrying her daughter, Charlotte Marie de Lorraine, now a beautiful young girl of sixteen, to the eldest son of the Duc de Vendôme, the Duc de Mercœur, while his younger brother Beaufort was to wed Mlle. d'Épernon, daughter of the duke; of that name. The Cardinal, however, represented to the Queen that the union of three Houses, each of which had been the cause of infinite trouble in the past, would constitute a menace to the authority of the Crown which could not possibly be tolerated, more particularly since Vendôme had lately married his eldest daughter to the Duc de Nemours, the head of a younger branch of the House of Savoy. Anne, accordingly, intimated that she could not see her way to sanction this project.

Madame de Chevreuse began to grow impatient; at every turn she found herself checkmated by Mazarin, whose power seemed to be increasing every day. It is true that the Cardinal's demeanour towards her left nothing to be desired; whenever they met, he assured her of his ardent desire to serve her, overwhelmed her with compliments, and, if we are to believe La Rochefoucauld, "even occasionally essayed to make her believe that she was inspiring him with love."<sup>1</sup> But she had obtained nothing for herself beyond the money mentioned elsewhere—part of which appears to have been in the nature of a reimbursement for the sums which she had formerly advanced to the Queen and for certain debts which she had contracted during her exile in the interests of Anne of Austria—and very little for her friends. Châteauneuf, whose return she so ardently desired, had been partially rehabilitated by being restored to his office of Chancellor of the Orders of the King; but he was still at Montrouge and seemed likely to remain there—at least, until Mazarin

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

had succeeded in so prejudicing the Queen's mind against him that he could afford to regard him as a negligible quantity ; some of the more humble of her adherents, like Alexandre de Campion, had received gifts of money or minor appointments ; but for her chief allies, the Vendômes, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Bouillons, she had obtained nothing, or, at any rate, nothing which could increase their influence and augment their power for mischief.

Hitherto, the duchess had been at pains to dissimulate from all but her own sympathisers her hostility to Mazarin, and, while working assiduously against him, appeared to be on the best of terms with the Minister. But gradually her anger and mortification began to get the better of her discretion. "Madame de Chevreuse regarded all these delays," writes La Rochefoucauld, after speaking of the excuses offered by Mazarin for postponing the recall of Châteauneuf to Court, "as so many artifices of the Cardinal Mazarin, who was insensibly accustoming the Queen not to accord her what she desired, and, by this conduct, diminishing the high opinion of her influence which she desired to give the world. She testified her dissatisfaction to the Queen frequently, and introduced into her complaints something stinging and mocking against the personal defects of the Cardinal. She could not endure being obliged to have recourse to this Minister in order to obtain what she desired from the Queen, and she preferred not to receive any favours rather than be indebted for them to the Cardinal."

Mazarin did not fail to take advantage of his enemy's indiscretion. "He adroitly availed himself of this conduct on the part of Madame de Chevreuse," continues La Rochefoucauld, "to persuade the Queen more and more that she wished to govern her. He told her that Madame de Chevreuse, being sustained by the Duc de Beaufort

and the cabal of the 'Importants,' whose ambitions and unruliness were well known, all the authority of the regency would pass into their hands, and that the Queen would see herself more in subjection, and more removed from affairs, than in the lifetime of the late King."

It was well for Mazarin and well for France that he had thus been enabled to open the Queen's eyes to the true objects of Madame de Chevreuse and the greedy faction whose mouthpiece she had constituted herself, for he had a more difficult and more important task in hand than to defend the family and *protégés* of Richelieu and prevent the reinstatement of turbulent princes and rebellious nobles in the offices and governments of which they had been so justly deprived. This was to make the Queen comprehend that, notwithstanding her near relationship to Philip III. ; notwithstanding all the engagements she had contracted in the past, the instances of the Holy See, and the representations of the chiefs of the episcopate in France, the interests of her son's realm imperatively demanded that she should hold fast to the alliance with the German Protestants, Sweden, and Holland, and persist in refusing to conclude a separate peace with Spain. Here again he had to contend with Madame de Chevreuse, who laboured strenuously to fulfil the promises she had made to her friends at Brussels, and unceasingly urged the Queen to put an end to an impious war, in which the sister contended with the brother, and Catholics armed against Catholics to the advantage of the Protestant Powers. "Madame de Chevreuse," wrote the Venetian Ambassador, Giustiniani, "full of partiality for Spain, exhorted the Queen to give ear to the conclusion of a separate treaty between the two Crowns, to the exclusion of their allies. She promised the most favourable conditions. 'It was,' she said, 'a maxim of the Cardinal de Richelieu never to conclude peace. The Cardinal de

Mazarin had inherited his principles.'"<sup>1</sup> And this is confirmed by Mazarin himself: "Madame de Chevreuse," he writes, "causes the Queen to be told on all sides that I do not desire peace; that I cherish the same maxims as the Cardinal de Richelieu; that it is necessary and that it is easy to make a separate peace. . . . Madame de Chevreuse wishes to ruin France."

The duchess certainly troubled herself very little about the interests of France, so long as she was able to further her own. But, happily, Anne of Austria was under no illusion as to the motives which actuated her, and the representations of Mazarin, backed by the remonstrances of the confederate Powers, rendered all her efforts in favour of peace with Spain futile.

The Queen, indeed, desirous of reassuring the allies of France, who, aware of the Spanish predilections of Madame de Chevreuse, had been much alarmed lest her reappearance upon the scene should be followed by a change of policy, actually went so far as to send to the Swedish Ambassador, Grotius, with the seals unbroken, a letter which she had received from her sister, the Empress: "I have rendered thanks to the Queen," writes Grotius to his Government, "for having acted so frankly towards Sweden, and I have told her that she can count upon the same fidelity on the part of the Queen of our country. . . . It is certain that the Queen will do nothing without the knowledge of her allies, although Madame de Chevreuse may be disposed to attempt everything in favour of the Spaniards, who have treated her very well."<sup>2</sup>

Little by little, the struggle for supremacy between the Cardinal and the duchess began to assume an appearance hardly distinguishable from open war. Madame de

<sup>1</sup> *Ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, tom. xcix, cited by Chéruel.

<sup>2</sup> Chéruel, *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV.*

Chevreuse no longer troubled to disguise her sentiments towards the Minister ; she and her friends met quite openly to discuss their plans, and even indulged in threats against the man who had had the temerity to thwart their greed and ambition. Mazarin's *Carnets* shed a curious light on this contest and furnish a striking testimony to the apprehension with which he viewed the manoeuvres of his tenacious and resourceful adversary.

"My enemies unite to work me ill. . . . Madame de Chevreuse animates them all. If her Majesty wishes to retain my services and judges me needful, it is now indeed necessary that she should cease to dissimulate and show that she intends to protect me."

"Madame de Chevreuse sees very clearly in all things ; she has most certainly divined that it was I who secretly influenced the Queen to prevent her restoring the government of Brittany to the Duc de Vendôme. She has told her father, the Duc de Montbazon, so, and also Montagu."

"Madame de Chevreuse is not discouraged. She says that the affairs of Châteauneuf are not all desperate, and that she asks only three months to show what she is able to do. She begs the Vendômes to be patient, and sustains them, promising them a change of scene soon. . . . Madame de Chevreuse hopes still to procure my dismissal. The reason she gives is that when the Queen refused to place Châteauneuf at the head of the Government, she told her that she was unable to do so at that moment, and that it was necessary to have consideration for me, from which Madame de Chevreuse has concluded that the Queen has much esteem and affection for Châteauneuf, and that, when I shall be no longer there, the place is assured to her friend. Hence the hopes and illusions by which they now sustain themselves."

"The art of Madame de Chevreuse and of the



CLAUDE DE LORRAINE, DUC DE CHEVREUSE  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY LUCHON, AFTER THE PAINTING BY D'EGMONT





‘Importants’ is to arrange that the Queen hears nothing but talk favourable to their party and directed against me, and to render suspicious any one who does not belong to them and testifies any affection for me.”

“Madame de Chevreuse and her friends spread the report that soon the Queen will summon Châteauneuf, and thus they deceive everybody, and lead those who think of their future to go to visit him and to seek his friendship. They explain the Queen’s delay in establishing him in my place, by saying that she has need of me for some time.”

“It is said that Madame de Chevreuse is secretly directing Madame de Vendôme and giving her instructions.”

This last passage refers to a new move on the part of the resourceful duchess, which occasioned Mazarin the greatest uneasiness. Although no lady at the Court was less of a *dévot*e than Madame de Chevreuse, she was on friendly terms with several members of the devout party, which still exercised considerable influence over the mind of Anne of Austria, and she knew how to make them serve her ends. She was aware that rumours current respecting those nightly conferences, when Mazarin remained alone with the Regent, under the pretext of instructing her in affairs of State, were the cause of much disquietude to the more prudent ladies about the person of the Queen and to Anne’s pious friends at the Val-de-Grâce and the Carmelites, and that they had only needed a little encouragement to venture on open remonstrance. This she took care should be afforded them; and, while Madame de Vendôme, a very saintly person, who was on terms of close friendship with the superiors of both the convents mentioned, engaged them to intervene, Mesdames de Sénéce and de Hautefort, the Queen’s *dame d’honneur* and *dame d’atours*, made it their

business to retail to their royal mistress all the impertinent tittle-tattle of the Court, and besought her, with tears in their eyes, to consider her reputation.

The beautiful and pious Mlle. de Hautefort was particularly active, and from her assistance Madame de Chevreuse hoped much. In devoting herself to the Queen in the days of her misfortune, Mlle. de Hautefort had been brought into close relationship with those who had suffered in the same cause, and she was greatly distressed to observe the growing indifference of her Majesty towards the friends who had made so many sacrifices for her sake, and that all her friendship and confidence seemed to be given to a foreign diplomat, who had no such claims upon her consideration. Since, however, she was no intriguer, it is very doubtful whether, in ordinary circumstances, she would have taken upon herself to interfere, but the *liaison*, real or apparent, between the Queen and the Cardinal threw her into the liveliest opposition to the Minister. She was deeply attached to Anne of Austria; she valued the Queen's reputation almost as dearly as her own; and, when she saw her sacrificing that at least to Mazarin, her horror and indignation knew no bounds. In proportion as the favour of the Cardinal increased, and the famous evening conferences grew longer and more frequent, the hostility of Mlle. de Hautefort became more and more pronounced; she told the Queen that, having declared against Richelieu in the face of the whole world, she could not, without condemning herself, continue his system and maintain his creatures, and besieged her with remonstrances and warnings concerning the intimacy to which she admitted Mazarin.

To add greater weight to her exhortations, she enlisted the services of Père Vincent—the celebrated St. Vincent de Paul—and persuaded him to speak to the Queen,

"M. Vincent saw the Queen to-day," records Mazarin in his *Carnet*, "and told her that she was losing her reputation."

Père Vincent's intervention was judged likely to prove the more efficacious, inasmuch as he was unconnected with any party, and it was impossible for her Majesty to suppose that he was actuated by any but the purest motives. His representations, however, do not appear to have had much effect upon the Queen, who heard him to the end in silence, and then turned the conversation to the subject of his missionary labours; and, after giving him a generous benefaction for the support of these, dismissed him.

No better success attended the efforts of Cospéan, Bishop of Lisieux, brother of Madame de Sénéce—a prelate so much respected by the Queen that he was permitted to address her as "*sa bonne fille*"—who had been induced to interfere by the persuasions of his sister and the Bishop of Beauvais; nor of the Comte de Joigny, a devout gentleman, who, weary of the ways of this sinful world, had withdrawn into a monastery, but who now emerged from his retreat to warn her Majesty that "the midnight conferences of a beautiful woman of forty-two and a man of forty could not be indulged in with impunity." But the convents had still to be reckoned with, and the vehemence with which they joined in the pious crusade against him caused Mazarin serious apprehension.

"One can judge of the affliction of these holy women," observes the Abbé Maynard, "who had offered up so many prayers on behalf of the Queen persecuted by Richelieu, when they saw her wrecked, or suspected of being wrecked, at the entrance to mature age. What allusions, what direct remonstrances, did they not fear to address to her! For many of these women possessed

as much courage as intelligence and piety. At the Carmelites, Mère Madeleine de Saint-Joseph had defended the Maréchal de Marillac, had demanded his body, and had erected for it a tomb with a magnanimous epitaph. The Visitation, in the Rue Saint-Antoine, more particularly directed by Vincent, was not better disposed towards Mazarin. But the centre and head of the opposition was at the Val-de-Grâce, that cherished retreat of Anne of Austria."<sup>1</sup>

The abbess of the Val-de-Grâce, Louise de Milly, dismissed from her post by Richelieu after the events of 1637, but reinstated in the first days of the regency, was permitted a great liberty by the Queen, and used it to inveigh in the most vigorous terms against Mazarin, and to urge her Majesty to dismiss him, govern France by Frenchmen, and make peace with Spain. She likewise eulogised the courage and devotion which Madame de Chevreuse had shown for the sake of the Queen, and deplored the fact that such services should have gone unrewarded. Anne, conscious of the obligations under which the abbess had placed her, listened to her with patience, but without making any reply. When, however, the superior of the Carmelites, who had no such claims on her indulgence, ventured on the same remonstrances, she became exceedingly angry, stigmatised the rumours concerning the Cardinal and herself as "cruel slanders," and declared that, "if another word were addressed to her on the subject of M. de Mazarin, she would never again visit that convent!"

Notwithstanding all these rebuffs, the devout party, urged on by Madame de Chevreuse, continued their campaign. Knowing that La Porte, who had suffered so much for the Queen during the last reign, was now the head of a kind of intelligence department, and was

<sup>1</sup> *Saint-Vincent de Paul: sa vie, son temps, ses œuvres, son influence.*

charged to report faithfully to his royal mistress everything that was said concerning her or her Government that might happen to come to his ears, they proceeded to enlist his services.

One day, after the rising of the Council, Anne was in her cabinet with Guitaut, the captain of her guards, and one of her women of the Chamber, when La Porte, who enjoyed peculiar privileges of access to her Majesty, entered the room. The Queen summoned him to approach, and carelessly inquired what people were saying. "I replied," writes La Porte, "that I was very sad, and that I knew not what I ought to say to her; that, if I told her nothing, I should be disobeying her orders, while, if I repeated to her the common reports, I should risk incurring her displeasure. She rejoined that she wished absolutely that I should tell her all these things, and that she commanded me to do so. I then told her that everybody spoke of her and his Eminence in a manner which ought to give her cause for reflection; that her virtue had placed her where she was; that her unblemished reputation had defended her against her enemies; that she had been able to console all France for the death of the late King; that she herself had beheld all Paris going to meet her at Saint-Germain, with acclamations which showed with what satisfaction it had received her for Regent, before even the Parlement had declared her such; but that, if once she did not respond to the expectations that had been formed of her and gave occasion to her enemies to defame her, she would soon see a great change, not only in the public mind, but in affairs.

"The Queen inquired who had told me this. I answered: 'Everybody, and that it was such common talk that no one spoke of anything else.' She blushed and became very angry, saying that it was *Monsieur le Prince*

who was defaming her and causing these reports to be circulated, and that he was a wicked man. I replied, that, since she had enemies, she ought to be very careful not to give them occasion to talk; to which she answered that, where no evil was done, nothing need be feared. I said that that was not enough, and that it was necessary to consider appearances, since the public judged, not by what was done, but by what was said."

The Queen turned away, and began to tap the window impatiently with her fan. La Porte waited until she was "somewhat appeased," and then told her that she ought to take warning from the example of Marie de' Medici, whose intimacy with another Italian, the Maréchal d'Ancre, had caused people to speak ill of her, and who had abandoned in her prosperity those who had assisted her in her first disgrace, in consequence of which, when the second arrived, she was herself abandoned.

Some days later, M. La Porte, "perceiving that such speeches annoyed the Queen, essayed to undeceive her by another means, more free and less dangerous." "I wrote," he says, "a letter, wherein I indicated generally all the rumours that were being circulated about her, what she ought to do to destroy them, and what I foresaw would happen if she did not give heed to it, and, having caused a copy to be made in another hand, I placed it in her bed, where she found it on retiring to rest. When she had read it, she became exceedingly angry, as she allowed me to see the following day, when she showed me the letter, without, however, permitting me to read it. But this means did not succeed any better than the others."

It assuredly did not, for Mazarin, who had at once been informed of what had occurred—one of his spies in the palace had actually seen La Porte place the letter

in the Queen's bed<sup>1</sup>—did not hesitate to approach her Majesty on the delicate subject of the rumours that were in circulation. He explained that they were the work of the unscrupulous cabal of which Beaufort and Madame de Chevreuse were the leaders and the devout party the complaisant dupes—this cabal which had been formed to dominate the Court and impose their wishes on the Regent herself; that their first object was to get rid of the Minister whose counsels showed the Queen in which direction her true interests lay, and that, to achieve this, there were no means which they would hesitate to employ. By this bold and skilful frankness, Mazarin succeeded in turning against the “Importants” the very weapons they had employed to combat him, and in embittering the Queen's mind against Madame de Chevreuse and her allies.

<sup>1</sup> *Carnet IV.* None of the memoirs of the time mention La Porte as the author of this epistle, and it is La Porte who confesses it himself. The Queen did not suspect who had been guilty of this impertinence, for she kept La Porte in her service for some time afterwards. The reason why Mazarin did not denounce him was, in all probability, because he wished to persuade the Queen that Mlle. de Hautefort, who was far more to be feared than La Porte, was the culprit. His *Carnets* show that he believed that the *valet de chambre* had acted at her instigation.



## CHAPTER XII

Exasperated to the last degree against Mazarin, Madame de Chevreuse resolves to proceed to the last extremities—And, with this object, skilfully foment the ambition and hatred of the Duc de Beaufort and the more violent section of the "Importants"—Suspensions of the Cardinal that some criminal project is in contemplation—He, however, refuses to be intimidated, and his assassination is determined upon—Prospects of success—Madame de Montbazon—Her hatred of the Duchesse de Longueville, daughter of the Prince de Condé—Two unsigned love-letters found at her house attributed by her to that lady—The innocence of Madame de Longueville is established, and the calumniator ordered to make a public apology—Madame de Montbazon offends the Queen and is banished from Court—Fury of the duchess and her friends—On the advice of Madame de Chevreuse, it is resolved that Mazarin shall be assassinated forthwith.

**R**EPULSED by Mazarin at every fresh assault on his position, Madame de Chevreuse still refused to acknowledge herself vanquished. The gallantry which had filled her youth had given place to ambition ; she believed herself capable of governing the Queen and the kingdom, and she was resolved to break every obstacle which hindered her designs. Flattery, deceit, intrigues, had all been employed in vain ; but the means of success were not yet exhausted, and, rather than abandon the struggle, she resolved to have recourse to the last extremities.

Among the "Importants" were a number of daring and unscrupulous men, such as Montrésor, Saint-Ybar, Barrière, Fontrailles, Fiesque, Beaupuis, and Varicarville, who had formerly been concerned in one or other of the conspiracies against the life of Richelieu, and might be pre-

pared, if necessity arose, to engage in a similar enterprise against Mazarin. They formed, so to speak, the advanced guard of the party, and were mostly close friends of the Duc de Beaufort, upon whose elevation they had based great hopes, and for whom they professed the most extravagant loyalty. To gain Beaufort, who was, besides, completely governed by the Duchesse de Montbazon, the young step-mother of Madame de Chevreuse, and the little faction who acknowledged him as their leader, was an easy task for Madame de Chevreuse, and, with the skill of an accomplished conspirator, she flattered their vanity and ambition, and fomented the hatred which they entertained for the Cardinal, until they were ripe for any mischief.

Mazarin, as well served by his police as Richelieu had been, was warned of the proceedings of Madame de Chevreuse, and suspected that some criminal project was in contemplation. He knew that the duchess would not be continually conferring with such men as these unless she intended to make use of their services, and he caused her to be so closely watched that very soon suspicion was changed to certainty.

"Madame de Chevreuse inspires them all," he writes in his *Carnets*. "She says that, if they do not decide to get rid of me, affairs will not go well; that the great nobles will be in quite as much subjection as before, that my power will continually increase, and that it is necessary to hasten matters before the Duc d'Enghien returns from the army."

Madame de Chevreuse, however, still hoped that it would be unnecessary to have recourse to violence, and that Mazarin, alarmed by the threats which were now reaching him almost daily, would prefer to relinquish his post, rather than expose himself to the risks which his continuance in office must involve. But beneath the

diffident and almost humble demeanour of the Italian cardinal there lay a brave heart. Mazarin had begun life as a soldier, and had given more than one proof of courage, notably at Casale, in September 1630, when, at the hazard of his life, he had thrown himself between the French and Spanish armies, just as the battle was beginning, with the news that a suspension of arms had been signed. He declined to be intimidated.

Finding that menaces succeeded no better than intrigues, Madame de Chevreuse hesitated no longer, and resolved to treat Mazarin as Luynes had treated the Maréchal d'Ancre, and as her friends had endeavoured, though happily without success, to treat Richelieu. Success appeared easy, almost certain. The Duc d'Eng-hien, the young hero of Rocroi, at present on the best of terms with the Cardinal, was still at the head of his victorious army, and would probably not return to Paris until the approach of winter brought with it the usual cessation of hostilities; the Italian regiments of Mazarin were also in the field, and no troops remained in the capital save the regiments of Guards, the commanders of which, Chandenier, Tréville, and La Châtre, were strongly in sympathy with the "Importants." And there was no reason to apprehend that the assassination of the Cardinal would recoil on those who had planned it. If he had not yet excited the same hatred with which the Maréchal d'Ancre or Richelieu had been regarded, he was intensely unpopular, and, though his removal by violent means might arouse reprobation in some quarters, the general feeling would undoubtedly be one of relief. The people, groaning beneath the weight of taxation, were eager for peace and regarded Mazarin as the chief obstacle to the termination of the war; the clergy had always detested the Protestant alliance, which was the key of Mazarin's foreign policy, as it had been of Richelieu's; the Parle-

ment was anxious to recover the political importance of which Richelieu had deprived it, and which his successor had as yet shown no inclination to restore ; the nobles, so long held in subjection, had not ceased to regret their old independence, and were naturally hostile to the domination of a foreigner. *Monsieur*, whom Mazarin had contrived to conciliate, and the politic Prince de Condé, who gave the Cardinal an intermittent support, were not the kind of men to quarrel with a victorious party ; and the Duc d'Enghien, whom the " *Importants* " would be prepared to overwhelm with honours, would hardly act in opposition to his father's wishes.

As for the Queen, the anxiety which she had displayed from the beginning of the regency to conciliate every one was misinterpreted by Madame de Chevreuse. She believed that, though the Cardinal had prevented Anne from acceding to the demands of her old friends, she had no intention of renouncing them, and that, the hostile influence once removed, the duchess and her allies would experience little difficulty in imposing their wishes upon her. For she altogether underrated the strength of the Queen's growing attachment to Mazarin. She believed that she had some affection for the Cardinal, but she did not for one moment suspect that that affection was developing into a passionate devotion.

The situation at the Court of France in the summer of 1643 was, indeed, a singular one. Never had a reign opened more gloriously than that of Louis XIV. ; never since the early years of François I., had France occupied so high a place among the nations of Europe. She had crushed the hitherto invincible infantry of Spain on the field of Rocroi ; she was about to wrest from Austria Thionville, the fortress which guarded the passage of the Rhine ; beyond the Alps, she had established her claim to be regarded as the arbiter of the differences of the Italian

princes ; in England, the King and the Parliament alike appealed to her for assistance. And the principal author of this success, instead of being praised and acclaimed, was calumniated, abused, and menaced with a violent death by the swashbuckling adherents of a vindictive and unscrupulous woman !

All through the month of July the attacks upon the Cardinal continued, for, though the Regent defended her Minister, the remains of her affection for her old friends still prevented her from adopting the decided attitude which Mazarin implored her to take, and openly proclaiming herself his protector. Suddenly, in the first days of August, a social complication, trifling enough in appearance, forced the hands of the conspirators and precipitated the inevitable crisis.

We have already spoken of the Duchesse de Montbazon, the second wife of the father of Madame de Chevreuse, and one of the most active members of the party of the "Importants." The duchess, who was some ten years younger than her step-daughter, with whom she was on terms of close friendship, was one of the most beautiful women of the Court, and also one of the most unprincipled. Vain and shallow to the last degree, she was exceedingly shrewd where her own interests were concerned, and absolutely without scruple as to the means she employed to attain her ends. Retz draws of her an unpleasing picture : " Madame de Montbazon was a very great beauty. Modesty was wanting in her manner. Her jargon, in a dull time, might have supplied the defects of her mind. In gallantry, she seldom kept faith ; in affairs, never. She loved nothing but her own pleasure, and above her pleasure her interest. I have never seen a woman who in vice preserved so little respect for virtue."<sup>1</sup>

In appearance, Madame de Montbazon was tall and

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

majestic. Her shape was admirable, though with a tendency to *embonpoint*. The fire of her splendid eyes "penetrated even the most insensible hearts," and her jet-black tresses, which she dressed in so bewitching a manner as to set the fashion to all the Court ladies, afforded a piquant contrast to the ivory whiteness of her skin. Her principal defects were a rather long nose and thin lips, which gave to her countenance an air of severity, which she certainly did not possess. In short, she was an admirable representation of a certain type of beauty which never lacks its devotees, and her conquests extended from the subjugation of the frivolous heart of *Monsieur* to that of Rancé, the future founder of La Trappe.

Madame de Montbazon "claimed universal admiration," but, though she was intensely vain, she was even more ambitious and mercenary, and, if her beauty were her idol, it was also her capital, by means of which she sought to secure for herself fortune and influence. For some little time the Duc de Longueville had occupied the proud position of her *amant en titre*, and the connexion was one from which the lady had reaped very substantial advantages. She had even cherished the hope that, when her consort, who was well advanced in years, should be gathered to his fathers, it might be regularised; and her mortification at the destruction of her hopes in this direction by Longueville's recent marriage with the beautiful and accomplished Anne Geneviève de Bourbon, only daughter of the Prince de Condé and sister of the Duc d'Enghien, was very keen. Nor was it lessened by the fact that, not content with depriving her of a possible husband, *Madame la Princesse* was seeking to deprive her of a lover as well, and was using every persuasion to induce her son-in-law to break off all connexion with this dangerous siren. In this she had not yet succeeded; but M. de Longueville, who valued his domestic peace,

and was besides by no means insensible to the charms of his lovely young wife, was neither so devoted nor so generous an adorer as he had once been ; and Madame de Montbazon had every reason to fear that ere long both his visits and his presents might cease altogether. Henceforward, Madame de Montbazon, already jealous of Madame de Longueville, whose wonderful beauty, hardly less remarkable intelligence, and charming manners were captivating all hearts, hated her with all the rancour of her sordid and vindictive nature. She was a dangerous enemy. Her lovers, past and present, were numerous and influential, her admirers numberless. She had tender relations with both Guise and Beaufort—the latter of whom had a grudge of his own against Madame de Longueville, for the marked coldness with which she had formerly received his advances—and, through them, could command the support of the Houses of Vendôme and Lorraine. Untroubled by scruples, she was prepared to make use of any weapon that lay ready to her hand to injure the woman whom she so bitterly hated. Nor was it long before she found one.

One evening, Madame de Montbazon had been entertaining a number of her friends in her hôtel, in the Rue de Béthisy. After the company had dispersed, two letters, evidently dropped by one of them, were picked up. The letters, which were unsigned, were in a woman's handwriting, and addressed to one of the opposite sex, for whom it was obvious that the writer entertained a very tender regard. Now, as ill-luck would have it, there had happened to be among the duchess's guests a young man who was well known to be one of the most devoted of Madame de Longueville's admirers, Maurice de Coligny, younger son of the Maréchal de Châtillon ; and Madame de Montbazon, thinking the opportunity too good a one to be lost, consulted Beaufort, with the

result that it was agreed that the lady should spread abroad the story of the dropped letters, and express her conviction that they were in the handwriting of Madame de Longueville and had been addressed to Coligny, and that Beaufort should confirm her.

The slander was speedily disproved. The letters were not forgeries, as several chroniclers have stated, but had been written by Madame de Fouquerolles to the handsome Marquis de Maulevrier, who had had the carelessness to drop them, and dared not publicly acknowledge them, from fear of compromising his inamorata. He went, however, to La Rochefoucauld, who was a common friend of Madame de Montbazon and himself, told him his secret, and begged him to employ his good offices to hush up the affair. "Madame de Montbazon," writes La Rochefoucauld, "had told me the story before it had been spread about. I perceived at once all the consequences that would ensue, and the use which the Cardinal Mazarin would be able to make of it against the Duc de Beaufort and all his friends. I was at that time only slightly acquainted with Madame de Longueville, but I was a particular servant of the Duc d'Enghien and a friend of Coligny. I knew the malignity of the Duc de Beaufort and Madame de Montbazon, and had no doubt that they wished to do an ill-turn to Madame de Longueville. I made every endeavour to induce Madame de Montbazon to burn these letters in my presence, and to say nothing about them. She gave me her promise to do so, but the Duc de Beaufort made her change her mind."

La Rochefoucauld readily promised to assist Maulevrier, and, after some difficulty, persuaded Madame de Montbazon to surrender the letters. He then showed them to the Prince and Princesse de Condé, to Madame de Rambouillet, Madame de Sablé, and several other



intimate friends of Madame de Longueville ; and, that lady's innocence having been fully established, they were burned in the presence of the Queen.

But the mischief had already been done, for, though the Duc de Longueville, whose position as the husband of the injured lady and the lover of her calumniator, was, as may be imagined, no enviable one, strongly advised his wife to overlook the outrage, and Madame de Longueville, aware that the aspersions on her character had from the first obtained but little credence outside the party of the "Importants," was quite willing to do so, *Madame la Princesse* absolutely refused to allow the matter to rest. That lady, who detested Madame de Montbazon, and whose natural arrogance had not been diminished by the victories of the Duc d'Enghien and the glory which, in consequence, enveloped the House of Condé, was beside herself with indignation at the affront put upon her daughter by "that cook's grand-daughter,"<sup>1</sup> as she contemptuously styled the guilty duchess. Nothing would satisfy her, she declared, but a public reparation, and she even went so far as to threaten that, if the Queen and the Government declined to protect the honour of her family, she and all her relatives would withdraw from Court.

The matter now became an affair of State. Beaufort, Guise, and Madame de Chevreuse used every endeavour to persuade the Queen to refuse to the outraged mother the satisfaction which she demanded ; but Mazarin threw his influence into the opposite scale. The astute Italian was not slow to perceive how this little disturbance might be turned to profitable account. By supporting the demand of *Madame la Princesse*, he would earn the

<sup>1</sup> In allusion to Madame de Montbazon's maternal grandfather, the Marquis de la Varenne Fouquet, who had been equerry of the kitchen to Henri IV.

gratitude of the Condé family and assure himself of their support ; while Anne's decision in favour of a public apology would discredit, not only Madame de Montbazon herself, but all the "Importants" who had identified themselves with her cause, prove to those who still hesitated upon which side to declare themselves how little influence the cabal really possessed over the Queen's mind, and possibly drive the hot-headed Beaufort to commit some act of folly which would bring about the ruin of the whole party. He accordingly pointed out to her Majesty—who was on very friendly terms with the Princesse de Condé and her daughter, while, on the other hand, the notorious gallantries of Madame de Montbazon had strongly prejudiced her against that lady—that, having regard to the provocation given, the exalted position of the injured party, and the great services of the Duc d'Enghien, *Madame la Princesse's* demand was not an unreasonable one, and that, in any case, it was of the utmost importance to conciliate so powerful a family as the Condés, lest the peace of the regency should be troubled.

Mazarin's representations carried the day, and Madame de Montbazon received orders from the Queen to repair to the Hôtel de Condé, and there to make a public apology to *Madame la Princesse* for what had been said at her house. The speech which she was to make was drafted by Mazarin, who was apparently working to settle the quarrel to the satisfaction of both parties. "I was present," writes Madame de Motteville, "on the evening that all these important trifles were discussed. I remembered that I wondered in my mind at the follies and the silly preoccupations of that society. The Queen was in her grand cabinet, and *Madame la Princesse*, excited and terrible, with her, making a crime of *lèse-majesté* out of this affair. Madame de Chevreuse,

involved for a thousand reasons in the quarrel of her step-mother, was with the Cardinal, composing the speech which Madame de Montbazon was to make. Over every word there was a parley of an hour. The Cardinal, playing the go-between, went from one side to the other, as though this peace were necessary to the welfare of France, and his own in particular. I never saw, I think, such complete mummery."

On the appointed day, the delinquent duchess duly proceeded to the Hôtel de Condé, where she found *Madame la Princesse* awaiting her, in the midst of a throng of relatives and friends whom she had invited to witness the humiliation of her enemy. Madame de Montbazon entered the room in full Court toilette and with an air of the utmost disdain, and, approaching *Madame la Princesse*, proceeded to read from a paper attached to her fan the apology which had been agreed upon. "The manner of the self-accused," writes *la Grande Mademoiselle*, who was present, "plainly indicated that her heart in no way repented of the fault that she had committed. Neither was the speech she made any better received by *Madame la Princesse*, who returned even a shorter answer, with a spirit little appeased, and without relinquishing that haughtiness of demeanour which accompanied her every action. It was only the semblance of a reconciliation."

The storm, indeed, was by no means allayed. Far from satisfied with having publicly humiliated her daughter's enemy, the *Princesse de Condé* begged the Queen to excuse her from attending any function at which Madame de Montbazon was to be present; and her Majesty, who considered the matter of no great consequence, consented, little foreseeing the embarrassment which this would entail.

It happened, some days later, that Madame de Chevreuse, very attentive to pay her court to the Queen,

the while she was plotting against the life of her Minister, gave a "collation" to her Majesty in Renard's garden,<sup>1</sup> with the idea of dissipating the last effects of this unfortunate affair, and Anne invited *Madame la Princesse* to accompany her, assuring her that she need have no fear of encountering Madame de Montbazon, since she was informed that the duchess was confined to her house by a slight indisposition. On learning this, the princess willingly joined her Majesty's party, but, when she entered the garden, the Regent was told that Madame de Montbazon was already there, and was, moreover, assisting her step-daughter to receive her guests. Anne was greatly annoyed at this mishap, and her embarrassment was increased when the Princesse de Condé announced her intention of retiring, in order not to disturb the harmony of the fête. This, however, the Queen would not permit, observing that she herself must remedy the matter, inasmuch as it was on the faith of her assurance that the princess had come. She accordingly sent one of her ladies to Madame de Montbazon, to explain the difficulty which had arisen and to beg her to feign illness and withdraw, in order to spare her Majesty further embarrassment. But the haughty duchess declined to fly before her enemy, and imprudently ignored the royal command, whereupon the Queen, greatly offended at such want of respect, immediately quitted the garden and returned to the Louvre, accompanied by the Princesse de Condé.

<sup>1</sup> Renard's garden was situated a little beyond the Tuileries, at the left-hand corner of what is now the Place de la Concorde. There were two long terraces, which commanded a fine view of the Cours-la-Reine, the fashionable drive along the banks of the Seine, laid out by Marie de' Medici in 1616, and the open country beyond it. Renard was the most celebrated caterer of his time, and in summer his grounds were a favourite rendezvous of the *beau-monde*, which met there to gossip, partake of refreshments, and listen to the music which he provided.

Mazarin, who was, of course, speedily informed of what had occurred, did not fail to fan the flame of her Majesty's resentment, and though *Monsieur* interceded for his former mistress, his intervention was of no avail, and on August 22 Madame de Montbazon received an order from the Queen banishing her to her country-house at Rochefort.

The disgrace of Madame de Montbazon exasperated that lady and her friends to the last degree, and it was decided to execute forthwith the murderous project which had become the last hope, the last resource, of the "Importants." For, as Madame de Chevreuse pointed out, further delay would be fatal to all their plans. The wanton attack made by Madame de Montbazon and Beaufort upon the reputation of a young princess, universally admired and esteemed, had injured the party immeasurably in public opinion, turned against them the whole influence of the Condés, and so incensed the Duc d'Enghien that only the express orders of the Queen had prevented him from returning at once to Paris to avenge his sister's honour upon her calumniators. Covered with the laurels of Rocroi and Thionville, which had surrendered to the French on August 10, Enghien, once in Paris, would obviously be the arbiter of the situation; and, unless they could contrive to get rid of Mazarin before the young victor's return, they might as well renounce the project altogether, since they would certainly not be permitted to reap the fruits of their crime.

Thus argued Madame de Chevreuse, and, whatever else we may think of it, her advice was undoubtedly sound.

## CHAPTER XIII

The existence of this murderous conspiracy, which is denied by La Rochefoucauld and Retz, established by Mazarin's *Carnets* and the *Mémoires* of Henri de Campion—Madame de Chevreuse the prime instigator of the plot—The conspirators—They decide to assassinate the Cardinal while riding in his coach through the streets—The life of Mazarin twice saved by the efforts of Henri de Campion—A critical moment—Beaufort determines to have the Cardinal assassinated as he is returning to his hôtel from the Louvre, on the night of August 30-31—Mazarin, warned of the danger which threatens him, does not stir from his house the whole evening—Indignation of Anne of Austria on learning of the designs against the Cardinal's life—Arrest of Beaufort—Flight of the other conspirators—Ruin of the "Importants"—Madame de Chevreuse is exiled to Tours.

**A**LTHOUGH the best informed and most veracious of contemporary chroniclers, such as Madame de Motteville and La Châtre, entertain no doubt whatever about the existence of this murderous plot, it was not generally credited at the time, and La Rochefoucauld and Retz have both denied it. "I am unable to say," writes the former, "whether the reason for this arrest [the arrest of Beaufort] was false or true; but the Cardinal de Mazarin spread the report that he had discovered an enterprise of the Duc de Beaufort against his person, and that people had lain wait in different places where he was to pass, in order to kill him. Others have believed, with more appearance of probability, that the Duc de Beaufort, from mistaken cunning, had caused him to be alarmed, in the belief that to frighten him would be sufficient to drive him from the kingdom, and that it was with this object that he held

secret meetings and imparted to them an air of conspiracy." And La Rochefoucauld adds: "I am persuaded that Madame de Chevreuse was in ignorance of the designs of Beaufort, and that she was unjustly persecuted."<sup>1</sup>

Retz holds much the same language, and pretends that the Abbé de la Rivière, the worthless favourite of the Duc d'Orléans, in order to deliver himself from the rivalry of the Comte de Montrésor in *Monsieur's* good graces, had sought to persuade Mazarin that there was a conspiracy against his life, in which Montrésor was concerned; that the Prince de Condé—who was anxious to get Beaufort out of the way before his son, the Duc d'Enghien, returned to Paris, from fear that the latter should insist on fighting a duel with him, to avenge his sister's honour—had given the Cardinal similar warnings; and that Mazarin believed or pretended to believe them. "What," he writes, "has prevented me from ever crediting the conspiracy, is that one has never seen any indication or evidence of it, although the majority of the servants of the House of Vendôme were for a long time in prison. Vaumorin and Ganseville, to whom I have spoken a hundred times during the Fronde, have sworn to me that there was never anything in the world more false. The one was captain of the guards, the other the equerry, of M. de Beaufort."

Well, neither La Rochefoucauld nor Retz had much scruple about perverting the facts of history when he had anything to gain thereby. La Rochefoucauld, though he had had no share in the criminal projects of Madame de Chevreuse and Beaufort, had been on terms of such close intimacy with them that he must have considered that honour and interest alike demanded that he should endeavour to cast doubt upon a conspiracy which had

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires.*

brought upon them and their party so much reprobation. As for Retz, his blind hatred of Mazarin is sufficient to account for his refusal to believe that any attempt upon the Cardinal's life had really been contemplated. If no conclusive evidence of the plot was obtainable at the time, it was because the most compromised conspirators, warned by their friends at Court, had succeeded in effecting their escape, and the denials of Vaumorin and Ganseville are perfectly worthless. The former did not become captain of Beaufort's guards until some years later ; the latter was never in the duke's confidence at all.

The suggestion that Mazarin invented the conspiracy in order to ruin Beaufort is entirely disproved by the famous *Carnets*. These were not composed for the public eye ; they express the writer's true sentiments, and they show that information was reaching the Cardinal from all sides which made it impossible for him to doubt that he was in the presence of a very real and pressing danger. Let us take, for example, the following passages :

"Madame de Chevreuse confers with the brothers Campion. Some plot is certainly being concocted. It is rumoured that I am to be attacked in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Plessis-Besançon has told me that there were more than forty armed persons around the Hôtel Vendôme.

"M. de Bellegarde told me that he knew that, if, in returning from Maisons,<sup>1</sup> I had not been in the carriage of his Royal Highness [the Duc d'Orléans], Beaufort would have assassinated me.

"All the Comte d'Orval's servants have seen, for three or four consecutive evenings, twelve or fifteen persons armed with pistols between the Hôtel de Créqui and his, so disposed that I must have been surrounded by them.

<sup>1</sup> Between Paris and Villeneuve Saint-Georges.



"I have received information that they intended to attack me when I was going in my carriage to the residence of the Duc d'Orléans, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain."<sup>1</sup>

Again, the correspondence of Mazarin and, in particular, his letters to his secret agents, show that he spared no efforts to lay hands on the conspirators who had succeeded in effecting their escape. The chief of these, the Comte de Beaupuis, son of the Comte de Maillé, had taken refuge at Rome, under the declared protection of Spain; and Mazarin brought great pressure to bear upon the Holy See, both officially and unofficially, in order to obtain his extradition, pointing out that a crime attempted against the person of a cardinal was one which ought particularly to arouse the indignation of the Pontiff and the Sacred College. Nor did he cease his efforts until the end of 1645, when he recognised that the new Pope, Innocent X., who had succeeded Urban VIII., belonged entirely to the Spanish party, and that France, in consequence, could expect neither favour nor justice from him. Well, Mazarin would have hardly acted thus, unless he had been absolutely convinced that a project of assassination had been formed against him. But, if there were not sufficient evidence forthcoming at the time to justify the Parlement passing sentence upon the accused, we have to-day, in the valuable but little known *Mémoires* of Henri de Campion,<sup>2</sup> the full and entire confession of one of the principal conspirators, with the plan and all the details of the affair.

Henri de Campion was the younger brother of Alex-

<sup>1</sup> The Luxembourg, where *Monsieur* had resided since the death of his mother, Marie de' Medici.

<sup>2</sup> The *Mémoires* of Henri de Campion were first published in 1807 by General Grimoard. His account of the conspiracy has been included in the collection of Michaud and Poujoulat, at the end of the *Mémoires* of La Châtre.

andre de Campion, the friend and, according to some writers, the lover of Madame de Chevreuse. Alexandre, it will be remembered, had been in the service of the Comte de Soissons, and had taken a prominent part in the intrigues which preceded the insurrection of 1641. After the death of Soissons at the battle of La Marfée, both he and his brother Henri entered the service of the Vendômes, and more particularly of Beaufort ; and when the duke, compromised in the conspiracy of Cinq-Mars, was obliged to fly to England, Henri accompanied him. He was warmly attached to Beaufort, and the latter, in return, gave him his entire confidence, so that no one was likely to be better informed as to the actual facts. Unlike his elder brother, Henri de Campion was no professional intriguer, but an honourable gentleman and a brave soldier, who would probably have made a name for himself, had not failing health obliged him to leave the Army. Moreover, his *Mémoires* were written or, at any rate, completed in 1662—that is to say, shortly before his death, which occurred in the following year—when he had become very devout. Mazarin being already dead, he had nothing whatever to gain by these tardy revelations—indeed, they remained unpublished for a century and a half—and these circumstances, joined to the fact that they confirm in a really remarkable manner the information which Mazarin received and recorded in his *Carnets*, place their veracity beyond all doubt, and have caused them to be accepted without hesitation by historians.<sup>1</sup>

Henri de Campion declares emphatically that a project existed for the assassination of Mazarin, and adds that, in his opinion, this project had been conceived, not by

<sup>1</sup> "It would seem, indeed," observes Cousin, "that Mazarin, in writing his notes, had had before his eyes the *Mémoires* of Henri de Campion, or that Henri de Campion, in writing his *Mémoires*, had had before his eyes the *Carnets* of Mazarin."

Beaufort, but by Madame de Chevreuse, acting in concert with Madame de Montbazon. "I believe," he writes, "that the duke's design did not proceed from his own private sentiments, but from the persuasions of the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Montbazon, who had absolute power over his mind, and cherished an irreconcilable hatred against the Cardinal. What makes me think this, is that, while he entertained this resolution, I always observed in him a secret repugnance, which, if I am not deceived, was overcome by the pledge which he may have given these ladies."

Although Campion associates Madame de Montbazon with Madame de Chevreuse, there can be very little doubt that Mazarin was correct in regarding the latter as the prime instigator. The co-operation of Madame de Montbazon, of whom Beaufort was deeply enamoured, must, however, have been of great assistance to her step-daughter in vanquishing the last scruples of the duke.

Beaufort, having consented to what was demanded of him, proceeded to communicate the plot to his intimate friend, the Comte de Beaupuis ; while Madame de Chevreuse took into her confidence Alexandre de Campion, "whom she loved deeply," says his brother Henri. Both approved of the project, "the first believing that it was for him the road to arrive at more important charges, and my brother seeing in it the advantage of Madame de Chevreuse, and, in consequence, his own."

A little later, at the end of July or the beginning of August, that is to say, at the time of the quarrel between Madame de Montbazon and Madame de Longueville, which precipitated the crisis, the conspirators decided to invite the co-operation of Henri de Campion. "The Duc de Beaufort," writes Henri, "having definitely resolved, with the Sieur de Beaupuis and my brother, to rid the world of the Cardinal de Mazarin, sent to summon

me one morning to the house of Prudhomme, the bath-keeper, where he lodged. On my arrival, he drew me aside and told me that his knowledge of my affection and my integrity obliged him to give me a proof of his friendship, which would show me that I possessed his entire confidence. I replied in a few words, according to my custom, that, whatever was the nature of the matter which he had to communicate to me, he would never have cause to repent having trusted me. He then called Beaupuis, who was alone in the room with us, but standing a little apart, and told me, before him, that he believed that I had observed that the Cardinal Mazarin was re-establishing at the Court, and throughout the realm, the tyranny of the Cardinal de Richelieu, with more authority and violence than had been shown under the government of the latter ; that, as he had entirely gained the mind of the Queen and placed all the Ministers at his disposal, it was impossible to arrest his evil designs, except by taking his life ; and that considerations for the public welfare having caused him to resolve to adopt this course, he had informed me of it, and begged me to assist him by my counsels and by my person in its execution."

Henri de Campion replied that, when he had attached himself to the duke's fortunes, it was with the intention of following him wherever he might care to lead, and that, however strongly he might disapprove of the project which he had just revealed to him, he should not abandon his master. Nevertheless, for some days he continued to combat his resolution with so much energy that, notwithstanding the efforts of Beaupuis and Alexandre de Campion, Beaufort at length began to waver, and said that he must take the advice of certain persons. "I believe," continues Campion, "that it was that of the two duchesses. He went away to have his consultation, and, when I returned to see him, I found him so strongly

confirmed in his first resolution that he told me the same evening, in Beaupuis's presence, that he had decided to execute promptly what he had communicated to me, and begged me to offer no more objections, since they would be useless."

Perceiving the futility of further argument, Henri yielded, and promised to assist him, but on two conditions : first, that he should not be required personally to lay hands upon the Cardinal, but merely to defend his master, in the event of Beaufort being himself attacked ; secondly, that the assassination should not be attempted unless the duke were himself upon the spot to authorise it by his presence. He was resolved, if he could do so without betraying his master, to prevent the commission of the crime, and knew that the difficulty of the undertaking would be sensibly increased if, whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself, the conspirators were required to stay their hands until their leader should make his appearance upon the scene. To these conditions Beaufort consented, and then communicated the plot to two of his oldest and most faithful servants—the *Sieur de Lié*, captain of his guards, and the *Sieur de Brillet*, his equerry. There the secret stopped ; for, though a number of other persons were to take part in the enterprise, the duke did not propose to take them into his confidence until the crucial moment had arrived. This explains the ignorance of Vaumorin and Ganseville, and what they told Retz during the Fronde.

The plan agreed upon was to attack the Cardinal, who was then residing at the *Hôtel de Clèves*,<sup>1</sup> in the *Rue de l'Oratoire*,<sup>2</sup> near the Louvre, while he was passing

<sup>1</sup> The *Hôtel de Clèves* had been built for Catherine de Clèves, widow of Henry I., Duc de Guise, assassinated at Blois in 1588. It remained standing until 1758.

<sup>2</sup> The *Rue de l'Oratoire* was also called the *Rue du Louvre*.

through the streets in his carriage. Unlike Richelieu, Mazarin had as yet no guards, and when he went out, he was merely accompanied by a few ecclesiastics and five or six pages and lackeys. The conspirators would suddenly present themselves, stop the coach, and assassinate the Cardinal. To ensure that a sufficient force should be at hand to overcome any attempt at resistance on the part of Mazarin's suite, a number of the Vendômes' servants, who were not in the secret, were armed, and distributed among the taverns in the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Clèves. They were told that the Condés proposed to insult Madame de Montbazon publicly, and that Beaufort desired to have a troop of his followers in readiness to resist them.

These men were to await the orders of Henri de Campion, who, having ascertained when Mazarin proposed to leave his house and his destination, would summon them to assembly in some street through which the Cardinal must pass, and send warning to Beaufort, so that he might join them and give them his last instructions.

Finally, the duke, in concert with Beaupuis and the two Campions, determined the parts which the principal actors were to play in the approaching tragedy. Brillet and Ganseville were to overcome the coachman and stop the carriage; a servant of Beaufort named d'Héricourt and one d'Avancourt, an intimate friend of Lié and "a very determined person," were to present themselves at either door of the coach and plunge their swords into the defenceless Cardinal's body; while Beaufort himself, on horseback, with Beaupuis, Henri de Campion, and the others, would engage and put to flight those who attempted any resistance. The crime consummated, the conspirators would immediately leave Paris for different places of safety, and remain there until Madame de

Chevreuse had succeeded in appeasing the wrath of the Queen and in reconciling her with Beaufort, in which task she would have the assistance of Alexandre de Campion, who was to take no part in the assassination.

The day selected for the first attempt arrived; and Henri de Campion, having assembled his forces in the Rue du Champ-Fleuri, a little street between the Louvre and the Rue Saint-Honoré, set out to make a reconnaissance. On approaching the Hôtel de Clèves, he saw Mazarin on the point of driving away in his coach, accompanied by the Abbé di Bentivoglio, nephew of the celebrated cardinal of that name, several ecclesiastics, and four or five lackeys. He inquired of one of them where their master was going, and was told that it was to the house of the Maréchal d'Estrées. "I perceived," he writes, "that were I to give this information to my friends, his death was certain, but I believed that I should be so culpable before God and before men that I had not the smallest temptation to do so. On the contrary, I went to inform the Duke of Beaufort that I was assured the Cardinal would not go out that day, in consequence of which he told me to return to those whom I had assembled at the Hôtel de Vendôme, where we all lodged, which I did at once.

"Some hours later, the duke, going through the town in his carriage, met the Cardinal, who was returning home. He told me of it in the evening, and I replied that I had been deceived. My intention was, when I perceived that I was unable to put an end to this design, to delay it as long as possible, in order that time might furnish some opportunity of changing it. But if, contrary to my wish, a chance of attempting it should present itself, I was resolved to suffer it to be executed rather than betray a prince who had placed his entire confidence in me. Such was my determination, which nothing would

have been capable of altering. In the meantime, I prayed continually to God to raise up some conjuncture which would cause the plot to fail, without any evil coming to the duke."

The following day, Campion ascertained that Mazarin was going to a "collation" at Madame du Vigean's country-house at La Barre, a village situated between Paris and Pontoise, at the entrance to the valley of Montmorency. The Queen was also to be of the party; but she had already started, and the Cardinal drove away with only a single companion, the Comte d'Harcourt.<sup>1</sup> On being informed of this, Beaufort ordered Campion to assemble their followers to pursue Mazarin. Campion obeyed, and then returned to the duke, whom he found with Beaupuis, preparing to get to horse. "Deeming that other arguments would be of no avail," he writes, "I told him that, if he killed the Cardinal in the presence of the Comte d'Harcourt, it would be necessary to slay them both, the latter being too generous to permit this deed without perishing with the first; that he must reflect that, not only would the assassination of the count bring shame upon them, but it would render the whole House of Lorraine his irreconcilable enemies; and that I believed that, to avoid these inconveniences, we ought to wait another day. Beaupuis was, on this occasion, of my opinion, and once again I saved the Cardinal, although he was under no obligation to me, since I merely acted from a sense of justice, and in the interests of the duke, whom, in my belief, such a deed would have disgraced and ruined entirely."

Some days later, the conspirators learned that on the morrow the Cardinal was going to dine at Maisons, and

<sup>1</sup> Henri de Lorraine (1601-1666), second son of Charles I., Duc d'Elbœuf. He was considered one of the best generals of his time, and his valour was not less celebrated.



that the Duc d'Orléans was also going. Henri de Campion persuaded Beaufort to promise that, if the Cardinal were in *Monsieur's* carriage, no attack should be made upon him ; but the duke insisted that, if he were alone, he should be killed. Early next morning, Beaufort mounted his horse and, followed by his *âme damnée* Beaupuis, posted himself in the courtyard of the Capuchin convent, near the Hôtel de Vendôme, leaving one of his lackeys in the street to warn him of the approach of the Cardinal ; while Campion assembled his followers at the *Ange*, a tavern in the Rue Saint-Honoré, with instructions from the duke that, if he saw that Mazarin were alone, he was to follow and attack him as his coach passed the Capuchin convent, where Beaufort and Beaupuis would be waiting to join him.

Campion was in despair, for, if *Monsieur* did not happen to be with Mazarin, it would be impossible to save the Minister, and in a few minutes the tragic fate of his compatriot the Maréchal d'Ancre would be his. Anxiously he strained his eyes to catch the first glimpse of the expected *cortège*. Presently, a magnificent gilded equipage, drawn by six splendid horses, turned into the Rue Saint-Honoré. It was the coach of the Duc d'Orléans. Was the Cardinal with the prince, or was he following in his own carriage ? A few moments would decide, but in those the unfortunate Campion, compelled, by his mistaken sense of loyalty to his master, to participate in a deed which he abhorred, seemed to live an eternity. Then, as the coach drew nearer, he saw, to his inexpressible relief, a scarlet-robed figure on the seat facing *Monsieur*, and knew that his prayers had been answered.

Joyfully Campion mounted his horse and rode to the Capuchin convent "to represent to the Duc de Beaufort that he ought to recognise that God did not approve of



GASTON DE FRANCE DUC D'ORLÉANS



his project, since he was encountering so many obstacles." The duke, who appeared much disturbed, told Campion that he would consider what he said, but that he wished to confer with certain persons, whose names he did not mention, and that afterwards he would inform him of his final resolution. "I believe," continues Campion, "that he went to find the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Montbazon, who assuredly had inspired him with the idea of this enterprise, and that they reprimanded him for his tardiness in executing the promise which he had given them ; because he returned so animated against the Cardinal that he declared to me that he could wait no longer, and that, since he was continually encountering obstacles by day, he was resolved to execute the deed by night." His plan was as follows :

The Cardinal went every evening from the Hôtel de Clèves to the Louvre to visit the Queen, and returned rather late, accompanied only by a favourite page. While he was in the palace, Beaufort, Beaupuis, and Henri de Campion would be there also ; but, as soon as he left, they would follow him and give the signal to their followers, who would assemble along the quay close to the Louvre, and, being all mounted, could speedily reach the spot. Under cover of the night, this ambuscade could be easily laid without awakening any suspicion, and the only obstacle to its success were the Guards on duty in front of the palace, who might interfere to protect the Cardinal, since it was only a short distance from the Louvre to the Hôtel de Clèves, and any disturbance would be certain to attract their attention.

To meet this difficulty, Beaufort decided to choose for the attempt the night of August 30-31,<sup>1</sup> when the Sieur des Essarts, a captain of the Guards who was devoted to him, would be on duty ; to take this officer, to

<sup>1</sup> And not the night of September 1-2, as Victor Cousin states.

some extent, into his confidence, and to beg him to give orders to his men that, whatever tumult might arise in the streets, they were not to interfere, but to confine themselves to guarding the gates of the Louvre. This Des Essarts readily promised to do, and everything seemed to be satisfactorily arranged, when, towards evening on the fateful day, the conspirators learned, to their consternation, that an order had been issued directing Des Essarts's company to mount guard behind the Louvre, and posting the *compagnie colonelle*, or first company of Guards, which the Duc d'Épernon commanded, in front of the palace.

Beaufort was in despair, but Madame de Chevreuse, Beaupuis, and Alexandre de Campion bade him take heart, saying that d'Épernon, who was an intimate friend of the duchess and not too well satisfied with the Court, could no doubt be persuaded to give the same order to his men as Des Essarts had agreed to do. Beaufort consented to Madame de Chevreuse approaching d'Épernon, and the duke, without asking any inconvenient questions, promised to comply with her request. But Campion asserts that, no sooner had the lady taken her departure, than d'Épernon, who shrewdly suspected what was in the wind and had no mind to be mixed up in such an odious affair, sent to inform Mazarin of the proposition which she had made to him.

That evening, when Beaufort's braves assembled at their rendezvous, a tavern called the *Deux Anges*, on the quay near the Louvre, they perceived quite a number of persons in the neighbourhood who appeared to be taking a great interest in their movements, although it was a spot in which it was nothing at all surprising to see a troop of horsemen. They waited until nearly midnight, when they received orders from Beaufort to disperse and return home. The nocturnal ambushade had failed as had

those by day. Mazarin had not stirred from his house the whole evening !

By the following morning, rumours of the attempted assassination had spread throughout the capital, where the most intense indignation was expressed, for, though such a project would not have lacked apologists had it been successfully executed, no one now cared to defend it; while the man who had escaped so great a danger, and appeared destined to triumph over his enemies, was assured of a host of protectors. A crowd of persons, who would perhaps have rallied to Beaufort victorious, hastened to offer their services and their swords to the Cardinal, and, when he left his house to go to the Louvre, he was escorted by three hundred gentlemen.

Mazarin fully comprehended that, in the midst of the dangers which surrounded him, all his strength lay in the affection of the Queen, and that upon that depended both his present safety and his future career. If the peril through which he had just passed, and which was still suspended over his head, did not enable him to oblige Anne definitely to espouse his cause and proclaim herself his protector, then she could not love him, and it would be best for him to end an intolerable situation by resigning his office and retiring to Italy. He came to the Louvre that morning determined to make one last effort, and to play the cards which the folly of Beaufort and the vindictiveness of Madame de Chevreuse had placed in his hands for all that they were worth, and as soon as he was admitted to the presence of the Queen, he saw that the game was already won.

Madame de Motteville, who was in attendance on the Queen when the rumour of the assassination which had failed reached her, has described the alarm and indignation of her royal mistress. "You will see before forty-eight hours have passed," said Anne to her, "how I shall

avenge myself for the evil turns these wicked friends of mine are doing me." "Never," observes the chronicler, "will the remembrance of these few words be effaced from my mind! I saw, at that moment, by the angry light which burned in the Queen's eyes, and by the events which occurred on the following day and on that same evening, the power which resides in a sovereign person when she is angry and is able to do as she wills."

On Mazarin's arrival, a meeting of the Council was immediately convened, Anne presiding. The Cardinal made a humble and pathetic speech, in which, after relating all that was known concerning the ambuscade of the previous night, he "represented that in truth he was always ready to sacrifice his person and his life for the welfare and the interest of the King and the kingdom, but that he was resolved not to sacrifice it without necessity and ingloriously to the ambushes and insults of his enemies, who were none other than those of the State. Wherefore, he concluded and insisted that he should be permitted to retire to Rome, to continue there in repose and security the services which the singular benefits which he had received from Louis the Just obliged him, wherever he might be, to render the Crown." <sup>1</sup>

The Cardinal's words produced the effect which he had anticipated. Anne's eyes filled with tears at the thought of being separated from the Minister whose remarkable capacities she was learning every day to appreciate more, and the man who had awakened in her the deepest and most sincere affection she had ever felt for any one. Fortified by the support of Condé and *Monsieur*, both of whom Mazarin had spared no effort to conciliate, and who protested that it was impossible to spare a Minister in whose firm and able hands the fortunes of France were everywhere prospering, she

<sup>1</sup> Aubéry, *Histoire du Cardinal de Mazarin*.

declined to accept the Cardinal's resignation and begged him to continue at the head of affairs. Mazarin consented, but he demanded in return that immediate measures should be taken for his protection, and a severe example made of those who had plotted against his life. This was accorded him, and before the Council broke up the arrest of Beaufort had been decided upon.

On leaving the palace, the Cardinal returned to the Hôtel de Clèves, and did not appear again until the following morning. No precaution was spared to ensure his safety ; his servants kept watch over him with drawn swords the entire night, and detachments of the Guards patrolled the neighbouring streets.

Meanwhile, Henri de Campion had been endeavouring to persuade Beaufort to retire to the country, and to remain there until the trouble had blown over. But the duke "still persevered in the same intention." He did not present himself at the Louvre that day, but attended a fête at Vincennes, which Chavigny, in his capacity of governor of the château, was giving to the Queen. Beaufort was in the highest spirits ; Anne, on the other hand, appeared depressed and abstracted. Afterwards, she admitted to Madame de Motteville that the sight of the duke's hilarity made her sad, and that she said to herself : "Alas ! that poor boy ! perhaps, in three days he will be here again, but in a place where he will not laugh." On Beaufort's return to Paris, Henri de Campion, who had not accompanied his master to the fête, because, as he considers it necessary to explain, "he had spent the day with a very rich damsel, whom he was prepared to espouse," had a long conversation with the duke, in which he again besought him to retire from Paris. Beaufort, however, refused, declaring that the rumour was beginning to be discredited, and that he hoped soon to be able to execute his purpose. "I left



him in this idea," writes Campion, "and did not see him again."

Next morning, Beaufort went to the chase, but, on his return, he proceeded, according to his custom, to the Louvre, to pay his respects to the Queen, being probably of opinion that to assume a bold front was the best way of allaying suspicion. On the steps of the palace he was met by his mother, the Duchesse de Vendôme, and his sister, the Duchesse de Nemours. Both ladies had been with the Queen all day and had observed that she was in a very nervous and excited state, as though in expectation of some event of unusual importance ; and they now implored the duke not to venture into her presence, but to leave Paris at once and retire to his father's château of Anet, assuring him that her Majesty's manner had caused them the greatest uneasiness.

Beaufort replied carelessly in the very words of the Duc de Guise, when warned at Blois of the peril which awaited him : " They will not dare ! " and went up into the Queen's grand cabinet, where Anne received him most graciously, and plied him with questions about the sport which he had had that day, " as if," observes Madame de Motteville, " she had had no other thought in her mind."

During this conversation, Mazarin arrived, upon which her Majesty rose, smilingly acknowledged Beaufort's salutation, and, bidding the Cardinal follow her, retired as usual to her private cabinet. The duke, probably not a little relieved at the pacific aspect of affairs, conversed for a moment with Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Hautefort, and then turned to leave the palace. At the door of the ante-room, however, he was confronted by Guitaut, captain of the Guards, who arrested him in the names of the King and the Regent, and bade him surrender his sword and follow him. For a moment,

Beaufort stared at the officer in amazement, as though incapable of realising the misfortune which had befallen him. Then he said : " Yes ! I obey, but, I confess, this is rather astonishing ! " And, turning to Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Hautefort, who were no less taken aback than himself, he added : " Mesdames, you see the Queen has caused me to be arrested."

Beaufort was conducted to the guard-room of the Louvre, in a small room adjoining which he passed the night. Early the following morning, he was conveyed, under a strong escort, to the Château of Vincennes, which he had visited as an honoured guest two days earlier. As the coach in which he rode passed through the streets of Paris, the populace, who would doubtless have acclaimed him had his *coup de main* succeeded, but who had nothing but ridicule for conspirators who failed, crowded to jeer at him. " Look ! " cried they. " There goes the man who wanted to disturb our peace ! " And they laughed derisively. "*Mais tout arrive en France,*" as La Rochefoucauld once observed ; and five years later, when Beaufort, having succeeded in effecting his escape from Vincennes, returned to Paris to become one of the leaders of the Fronde, the same people hastened to exalt him into their hero, "*le Roi des Halles.*"

On arriving at Vincennes, the duke was confined in a room in the donjon tower and very closely guarded, though two of his servants—a *valet de chambre* and a cook—were permitted to attend him. A request for more lenient treatment which Madame de Motteville ventured to prefer, on behalf of the Duchesse de Vendôme, whom the Queen had declined to receive, was sharply refused.

The arrest of Beaufort involved the dispersal of his accomplices, his friends, and his family. The Duc and Duchesse de Vendôme, and their eldest son, the Duc de

Mercoeur, received orders to retire to Anet,<sup>1</sup> where they sheltered for some time the most compromised of the conspirators, who had fled thither on the first alarm. Mazarin demanded that they should be surrendered ; the duke refused ; and the Cardinal was preparing to besiege the château and take them by force, when Vendôme decided to retire with his family to Italy, and his *protégés* scattered in various directions in search of safety, Henri de Campion going to Jersey, while Beaupuis, as we have seen, took refuge at Rome. The more violent of the "Importants," such as Montrésor, Béthune, Saint-Ybar, and Varicarville, were banished to distant provinces, where they were kept under the closest surveillance ; La Châtre was deprived of his charge of colonel-general of the Swiss, which was restored to Bassompierre ; and a decree of the Council requiring every bishop resident in Paris to return to his diocese virtually deposed the Bishop of Beauvais from his political dignities,<sup>2</sup> and ensured the departure from the Court of the Bishop of Lisieux, the idol and lawgiver of the *dévots*, whose pious machinations had caused Mazarin so much disquietude.

But Mazarin was well aware that his triumph would not be complete, nor even his personal safety assured, if Madame de Chevreuse, the brain of the Opposition and the real author of the murderous conspiracy which had so nearly succeeded, remained at Court to devise fresh machinations against him. With her devoted friend Châteauneuf close at hand—a personage too prudent to

<sup>1</sup> Vendôme excused himself from obeying on the pretext that he was too unwell to travel, upon which the Queen sent him her own litter, as a gentle hint to hasten his departure.

<sup>2</sup> This virtual deposition was, however, soon converted into a formal one, for the bishop petitioned the Queen to state the reason why no exception had been made in favour of a Minister of State. The Queen at first endeavoured to evade this request, but, as he continued to importune her, she lost patience and sent him a decree which removed him from the Council, "*pour cause d'incompétence.*"

allow himself to be compromised in criminal projects, though he would be perfectly ready to profit by them—the duchess would still be a perpetual menace, if not to the Cardinal's life, at any rate to his authority. The disgrace of Madame de Chevreuse and her separation from Châteauneuf were, then, indispensable.

On September 3, a royal messenger was dispatched to Montrouge, to inform the ex-Keeper of the Seals of the arrest of Beaufort and to summon him to the Louvre. On his arrival, the Queen received him very graciously, and after inquiring, with much apparent solicitude, after the infirmities he had contracted during his long imprisonment at Angoulême, informed him that she had bestowed upon him the government of Touraine, vacant through the death of the Maréchal de Gassion before Thionville, and that it was her desire that he should assume office without delay. Too happy to escape the consequences of the rashness of his friends and to find himself once more in the possession of an important post, Châteauneuf thanked the Queen, assured her of his desire to conform in all things to her wishes, exchanged some compliments with Mazarin, who was present at the interview, and whom he now saw for the first time, and returned to Montrouge to prepare for his departure for Tours, without even venturing to see Madame de Chevreuse.

That lady did not imitate the discretion of her friend. According to La Châtre, on the evening of the arrest of Beaufort, “her Majesty told Madame de Chevreuse that she believed her innocent of the designs of the prisoner, but that, nevertheless, she judged it advisable that she should retire, without scandal, to Dampierre, and that, after some stay there, she should withdraw into Touraine. But Madame de Motteville, who seems to be better informed, gives a different account of the duchess's disgrace.

“Madame de Chevreuse,” she writes, “disgusted at seeing all her friends exiled and ill-treated, and her own influence declining day by day, complained to the Queen of the little consideration which she showed to her old servants. The Queen requested her not to interfere, but to leave her to govern the State and to choose what Minister she pleased, and manage her affairs in her own way. She counselled her, as she did me the honour to tell me, to live pleasantly in France, not to meddle in any intrigue, and to enjoy under her regency the peace which she had never had in the days of the late King. She represented to her that the time had come to find pleasure in retirement and to regulate her life by the thoughts of another world. She told her that, on that condition, she promised her her friendship; but that, if she chose to trouble the Court and to meddle in matters with which she forbade her to concern herself, it would force the Queen to exile her, and that she could promise her no other favour than that of being the last to be dismissed.

“Madame de Chevreuse did not take these remonstrances and this counsel in the spirit that is practised in convents; she did not believe that charity and consideration for her salvation were their principal motive. It is not in a Court that such merchandise is sold in good faith, nor is there received with humility. Thoughts of retreats do not enter the heart from human motives; while, on the contrary, nothing makes the mind so rebellious as preachments against the grain. This one produced precisely that effect, and, as the Queen received no satisfaction from her answers or her conduct, her displeasure increased; and Madame de Chevreuse, aware that the goodwill of the Queen towards her was daily diminishing, was not surprised at last to receive an order bidding her retire to Tours.”

## CHAPTER XIV

Madame de Chevreuse in Touraine—She renews her intrigues—She is not permitted to visit Queen Henriette Marie at Bourbon-les-Bains—Arrest of her Italian physician, Paleotti—The *exempt* Riquetti sent to conduct Madame de Chevreuse to Angoulême—Fearing that imprisonment awaits her, she decides to leave France for the third time—And escapes in disguise to Brittany, whence she sails for England—Her ship is captured by two cruisers in the service of the Parliament, and conveyed to the Isle of Wight, where she is in danger of being delivered over to the French Government—She appeals to the Earl of Pembroke, governor of the island, and is permitted to proceed to Flanders—She meets again her old lover, Charles IV. of Lorraine, and persuades him to refuse the offers of Mazarin—Outbreak of the Fronde—Peace of Rueil—Return of Madame de Chevreuse to France.

AND so, while the triumphant Mazarin was writing in his *Carnets* : “I should no longer doubt, since the Queen, in an excess of goodness, has assured me that nothing can deprive me of the part which she has so graciously given me,” Madame de Chevreuse, inwardly raging at the overthrow of all her ambitious schemes, retired to Dampierre, where she had received permission to make a brief stay before proceeding to Touraine. Her departure from the Court was a staggering blow to the Catholic party and the advocates of peace with Spain ; while, on the other hand, it was hailed with joy by the friends of the Protestant alliance. “The Sieur de l’Estrade,” writes Gaudin to Servien, “has complimented her Majesty, on behalf of the Prince of Orange, on the dismissal of Madame de Chevreuse, saying that, by this action, she has shown the good intention that she has for the interests of her

allies, since, from the time of her arrival, the said lady offered her peace on very advantageous terms, and that the Spaniards should very willingly surrender all that the French had conquered, provided that only one thing were accorded them, namely, the abandonment of the Swedes and the Dutch.”<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that had Madame de Chevreuse consented to keep quiet at Dampierre, the Cardinal might have permitted her to remain there, and not have insisted on her retiring to Touraine. But, far from doing this, she moved Heaven and earth to save those who had compromised themselves on her behalf, kept up an active correspondence with the fugitive conspirators at Anet, and sheltered Alexandre de Campion and provided him with money to enable him to evade the pursuit of Mazarin's agents. Soon, too, she recommenced her intrigues, and found means to send letters to the Queen protesting her innocence and appealing from the enmity of Mazarin to the justice of Anne of Austria.

The Cardinal, losing patience, despatched message after message to her to hasten her departure for Touraine ; but, under various specious pretexts, she contrived to defer it, nor was it until she had obtained the Queen's promise that the remainder of her debts should be discharged that she condescended to obey and to betake herself to her estate of Verger, between Tours and Angers. Here she found herself almost completely isolated, for now that she was no longer young and beautiful, and that there seemed little chance of her ever regaining the influence she had once exercised at Court, few cared to brave the displeasure of the Government by paying their court to her, and almost her only visitor of importance was her fellow-exile, the Comte de Montrésor, who had been banished to the same part

<sup>1</sup> Letter of October 31, 1643, cited by Chéruef.

of the country. "The residence of Madame de Chevreuse at Tours," writes the count, "gave me the opportunity of seeing her from time to time, and, although this was not often, I did not fail to become better acquainted with her character and disposition than during the whole of the time when she had been more fortunate and in greater consideration. The almost complete isolation in which she was left by those who were under obligations to her, and who were united to her by the ties of friendship and interest, made me judge of the little faith one ought to repose in the men of the present age, which increased the desire that I had to employ myself in rendering her services with more care and affection, on such occasions as presented themselves. I was not ignorant that the construction which people would be ready to place on the visits which I had the honour to pay her were capable of injuring me and of destroying my peace; but the esteem and respect that I entertained for her person and her interests persuaded me willingly to run the risk, observing, nevertheless, this precaution, that they should not be too frequent and that there should be no ostentation either on her part or on mine. The troubles by which her whole life had been agitated were not yet ready to terminate."<sup>1</sup>

They certainly were not, for the duchess went out of her way to find them. Vanquished within the realm, she turned to her foreign allies for assistance, and embarked upon an active correspondence with England, Spain, and the Netherlands. Her principal intermediary in these intrigues was Lord George Goring, Charles I.'s Ambassador at the French Court, and, under the cloak of the British Embassy, Madame de Chevreuse was enabled to keep in constant communication with her friends abroad.

*Mémoires.*



During the summer of 1644, the Queen of England, the unfortunate Henriette Marie, came to seek an asylum in France, and received a very affectionate welcome from Anne of Austria, who assigned her a pension and apartments in the Louvre, from which the Court had now removed to the Palais-Royal. Madame de Chevreuse was naturally very anxious to see again this royal lady, who had treated her with so much kindness during her stay in England, and her Majesty was no less desirous of pouring her troubles into the sympathetic ear of her old and faithful friend ; and, since she proposed to take a course of the waters of Bourbon, she asked permission of the Regent to invite the duchess to visit her there. Anne replied that the Queen, her sister, was at liberty to do as she pleased ; nevertheless, it was privately intimated to Henriette, by the Chevalier de Jars, that the Regent would certainly take it amiss if she received a visit from a lady who had so gravely offended her Majesty.

This disappointment exasperated Madame de Chevreuse beyond measure, and she redoubled her efforts to bring about the overthrow of her enemy. Mazarin, however, was on the alert and had a close watch kept on all her manœuvres, with the result that, about the middle of November, he caused the comptroller of the duchess's household in Paris to be apprehended, a step which was followed by the arrest of her Italian physician, Paleotti, as he was riding with Mlle. de Chevreuse in her coach.

Madame de Chevreuse, furious with indignation, wrote to the Queen, demanding redress for the insult offered to her daughter, "who, together with the women who were with her, had been compelled to alight from her coach, while two archers held their pistols to her throat, and cried without ceasing : '*Tue ! Tue !*'—a proceeding so outrageous that, as I expect your justice to

render me satisfaction in the person of my daughter, so also I promise myself from your goodness a guarantee for the future against such accidents."

Anne of Austria, at the Cardinal's request, had given strict directions that all communications from the exiled duchess should be presented through the Minister ; but Madame de Chevreuse found means to have her letter conveyed direct to the Palais-Royal and placed upon a table in her Majesty's oratory. The mode of its delivery, no less than the tone of this epistle, deeply offended the Queen.

Meanwhile, Paleotti, who had been conveyed to the Bastille, was being subjected to searching interrogatories. The Italian doctor possessed none of the obstinate loyalty of a La Porte or a Chevalier de Jars, and the threats of those to whom his examination had been entrusted did not fail to wring from him admissions very damaging to his employer. Mazarin thereupon persuaded the Queen, whom the audacity and importunities of her former confidante had thoroughly exasperated, that the duchess must be removed still further from the Court, and to a place where it would be possible to have her kept under much closer surveillance ; and Riquetti, an *exempt* of the Gardes du Corps and one of the Cardinal's most trusted agents, was despatched to Verger, bearing an order for Madame de Chevreuse to retire to Angoulême, whither he was charged to conduct her.

The name of Angoulême had a sinister sound in the ears of Madame de Chevreuse, for it was in the citadel of that town that her friend Châteauneuf had passed his ten years of captivity, and the duchess reflected with a shudder that, in all probability, Mazarin had in his possession evidence of her criminal intrigues with the enemies of the State sufficient to justify her condemnation to a similar fate. Rather than submit to what to her

would have been little better than a living death, she resolved to endure again the perils and hardships which she had braved seven years before. That same night, accompanied by her daughter Charlotte, who had joined her mother after the arrest of Paleotti and refused to be parted from her, and two servants, she left the house, in disguise, and made her way across la Vendée and Brittany to the château of an old friend of the Rohans, the Marquis de Coetquen, a few leagues from Saint-Malo.

The generous Breton noble, though aware of the risk which he was incurring, sheltered the fugitives for some days, and then procured them passages in a ship bound from Saint-Malo to Dartmouth, whence Madame de Chevreuse intended to make her way to Flanders. Before sailing, the duchess left in the care of Coetquen her famous diamonds, with instructions to send them to Montrésor, who subsequently despatched them to their owner at Liège.<sup>1</sup>

In mid-Channel the duchess's ship was captured by

<sup>1</sup> Montrésor paid somewhat dearly for rendering this service to the duchess, for, scarcely had he parted with the diamonds, than Mazarin, whose spies had intercepted some of the correspondence between Madame de Chevreuse and the count, caused him to be arrested and conveyed to the Bastille, where he remained for several months. To Coetquen, who wrote to the Cardinal to confess his charity towards the fair fugitive and to ask for absolution, Mazarin, on the other hand, seems to have shown singular indulgence. "I have seen from what you have taken the trouble to write to me," he writes, "the information that you give me concerning the stay of Madame de Chevreuse in one of your residences. As to which, having conversed with the gentleman whom I am sending back to you, I have judged it superfluous to set down here the particulars of which I have spoken to him. Leaving him, therefore, to inform you of them, I shall content myself by assuring you that I have received as I ought the proofs that you give me of your affection for the service of the King in this incident. I have not failed to represent to the Queen all that I ought; excusing what has passed by the reasons that you send me, and those which the said gentleman has explained." It should be observed, however, that, whereas Montrésor was regarded by Mazarin as a dangerous conspirator, Coetquen appears to have been a perfectly innocuous personage.

two cruisers belonging to the Parliamentary party and conveyed to the Isle of Wight. There Madame de Chevreuse was recognised, and, since she was known to be a friend of Queen Henriette Marie, her captors treated her with scant courtesy, and not only declined to facilitate her journey to Flanders, but even talked of delivering her over to the authorities of the nearest French port. Fortunately, however, she ascertained that the Earl of Pembroke, with whom she had been on very friendly terms during her last residence in England, was governor of the Isle of Wight. She at once resolved to appeal to him, and despatched to London, where Pembroke then was, the following letter :

“MONSIEUR,—As the continuance of my ill fortune has obliged me promptly to leave France, in order to preserve in a neutral country the liberty of which the power of my enemies intended to deprive me, the only favourable way which I found of avoiding this disgrace was to embark at Saint-Malo, to pass into England and thence to Flanders, in order to reach the district of Liège, from which I should be able to justify my innocence in safety, if they were willing to listen to me, or, at any rate, to protect myself from the persecution which for the past year and a half the hatred and cunning of the Cardinal Mazarin has procured me. Having, with this intention, taken passage in a vessel which I found ready to start for Dartmouth (*sic*), where, on my arrival, I intended to send for the passports which I should require to enable me to proceed to Dover and there to embark for Dunkerque, it was seized by two captains of the ships-of-war which are under the authority of the Parliament, in which I have arrived in this Isle of Ouit (*sic*), of which I have learned that you are governor. This has greatly rejoiced me, being assured that, in your virtue and courtesy, you will

not refuse the supplications that I make to you to demand of the gentlemen of the Parliament a passport for me to go from this place to Dover, and there to take ship to pass to Dunkerque, where the miserable state of my affairs presses me to proceed as quickly as possible. It is a favour that I hope from the justice of the gentlemen of the Parliament, that they will have the kindness not to make me wait, since the confidence that I have in their generosity, and my resolution never to render myself unworthy of receiving some proofs thereof, cause me to hope for this favour, which I shall await impatiently by the return of the bearer of this, whom I am sending expressly for this purpose to London, with the servant of your lieutenant in this island, from whom I believe that you will receive a more particular account of the accidents of my voyage. I curtail them as much as possible, so as not to weary you by so long a narrative ; and it suffices to make you understand my need of your assistance in the condition in which I am to obtain promptly the passport that I demand of the gentlemen of the Parliament. I beg you to believe that I shall never have entire satisfaction until I have shown by my services that you have obliged a person who will be perfectly all her life, Monsieur,

“Your very humble and very affectionate servant,

“MARIE DE ROHAN, Duchesse de Chevreuse ”<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the intervention of Pembroke, the necessary passports were accorded Madame de Chevreuse, and she was enabled to gain Dunkerque, from which she proceeded to Liège, where she had requested permission of the Spanish authorities to take up her residence.

Thus began the third exile of this adventurous lady, but in circumstances very different from the two which had preceded it. On her first departure from France, in

<sup>1</sup> *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, tom. cvi., cited by Cousin.

1626, she had been in the zenith of her youth and beauty; and her residence at the little Court of Nancy, where she had reigned supreme over the heart of the susceptible Charles IV., had been but one long triumph. During the exile which began with her romantic flight to Spain in 1637, she had had to endure many dangers and hardships, but she was still comparatively young and still beautiful, enjoyed all the consideration due to the bosom-friend of the Queen of France and to the ablest opponent of Richelieu's rule, and was sustained by the confident expectation of one day receiving from the grateful hands of Anne of Austria a splendid recompense for all her devotion. Now, however, age was beginning to make itself felt; her waning charms promised her but few conquests; her temper was soured by failure and disappointment, and, in losing the affection of Anne of Austria, she knew that she had lost the greater part of her prestige both in France and abroad, and could no longer command the homage of sovereigns and statesmen.

We possess comparatively few details concerning the life of Madame de Chevreuse during the next four years, but these show that, amidst the reverses of Fortune, she still preserved her courage and energy, and displayed an indefatigable activity in stirring up sedition in France and in combating the policy of Mazarin abroad. Much of her time seems to have been passed at the little Court of Brussels, where she found again her quondam lover, Charles IV. of Lorraine. "Nearly twenty years had passed," observes the Comte d'Haussonville, "since the day when these two, then young, thoughtless, and confident, had rashly flung themselves into a first enterprise against the Government of France. Neither time nor experience had profited them much. Madame de Chevreuse was again banished from that Court which she had aspired to dominate. The Duke of Lorraine was further

than ever from recovering his dominions. To their great astonishment, they had both encountered, in the present counsellor of the Regent, in the subtle Italian, who professed to be so insignificant and so humble, and whom they so much despised, an adversary quite as skilful and not less redoubtable than had formerly been for them the terrible and imposing Minister of Louis XIII.”<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Chevreuse found the duke very weary of the career of a vagabond prince and a soldier of fortune, and convinced that little hope remained of recovering his lost dominions, save by an alliance with France. Mazarin, on his side, had resumed all the plans of Richelieu, and was sparing no effort to detach Charles from Austria and Spain. He was working to gain the co-operation of the duke’s *soi-disant* consort, the Princesse de Cantecroix, and had proposed to Charles that he should break openly with Spain and, with the assistance of French troops, invade the Franche-Comté. Aware that the principal obstacle to success was the influence of Madame de Chevreuse over the Duke, the moment he learned of her arrival at Brussels, he engaged Charles’s sister, the Princesse de Phalsbourg, whom he had won over to his interests, to keep him informed of the least movements of his enemy.

“The Cardinal thanks the Princess of Phalsbourg for the new proofs which she has given him of her friendship,” he writes. “He begs her to give him news frequently of what happens on that side, *and particularly of Madame de Chevreuse.*”

And again :

“It would be of extreme importance to ascertain the reason for which Madame de Chevreuse’s servant has been arrested, and the Queen begs the Princesse de Phalsbourg to omit nothing to learn the truth, since one has already had some information here, from the side of Liège, of

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la réunion de la Lorraine à la France.*

certain proposals which the said lady has made to the Spanish Ministers in that quarter."

And in a third letter :

"The Cardinal renders his very humble thanks to the princess for the information which she has given him. He begs her to continue to do him the same favour, and *particularly in that which concerns Madame de Chevreuse*, who, according to the advices which he receives from various quarters, thinks of nothing but of practising machinations against the said Cardinal."<sup>1</sup>

Long and obstinately did Mazarin and the duchess dispute possession of the wavering Charles IV., but ultimately the advantage remained with the latter, whose ascendancy over the mind of the prince had survived their love and retained him in the service of Spain.

The year 1649 arrived ; the Fronde broke out. In the early morning of January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Court secretly quitted Paris for Saint-Germain. A few days later, the second Prince of the Blood the Prince de Conti, the Duc de Longueville, the Duc d'Elbeuf, the Duc de Bouillon, the Maréchal de la Mothe-Houdancourt, La Rochefoucauld, and a number of other great nobles, placed their swords at the service of the popular cause, and civil war began. We can imagine with what eagerness Madame de Chevreuse followed the course of the struggle and the activity which she displayed to bring about an alliance between the Spanish Ministers at Brussels and the rebels. The Spaniards were, of course, only too ready to assist in fomenting troubles which promised to save them from the necessity of an inglorious peace, and offered the Frondeurs both men and money. The malcontent nobles had not the smallest scruple about accepting the assistance of the enemies of their country,

<sup>1</sup> Letters of November 11, December 2, and December 23, 1648, published by Victor Cousin, *Madame de Chevreuse*.



and, ignoring the opposition of the majority of the Parlement, they signed a treaty with the Archduke, who immediately prepared to invade Champagne. This intelligence made both the Court and the magistracy anxious to come to terms, and on March 12, 1649, a treaty was signed at Rueil, which had the effect of putting an end to the war, though it left matters very much as they had been before hostilities began.

A month later, Madame de Chevreuse returned to Paris.

## CHAPTER XV

The Marquis de Laigues, last lover of Madame de Chevreuse—Reconciliation between the duchess and Mazarin—She connives at the *liaison* between her daughter, Charlotte de Lorraine, and Retz—After a brief sojourn at Dampierre, Madame de Chevreuse is permitted to return to Court—Her reception by Anne of Austria at Compiègne—Her prudent conduct—The Cardinal avails himself of her assistance in his negotiations with Spain and Charles IV. of Lorraine—Mazarin and Condé—Pretensions of *Monsieur le Prince*—Madame de Chevreuse employed by the Cardinal to bring about a *rapprochement* between him and the Vendômes—Return of their Majesties to Paris—Beginning of the New Fronde—Rupture between Mazarin and Condé—Overtures of the Old Fronde—The Cardinal surrenders to the prince's demands, and an apparent reconciliation is effected.

AT the time when her third exile terminated, Madame de Chevreuse was in her fiftieth year. Few traces of that radiant beauty which had captivated so many hearts remained, but her vivacity and her charm of manner had survived her physical attractions, and she was still eminently fascinating. Needless to say, she had not yet renounced gallantry, and had, indeed, just found a new, and, as it was to prove, a last lover, in the person of the Marquis de Laigues, who, at the beginning of 1649, had been sent by the Frondeur nobles to Brussels to negotiate the treaty with Spain.

If we are to believe Retz, when Laigues left Paris, Montrésor had advised him to pay assiduous court to the duchess, since, if he could succeed in gaining her heart, the negotiations with the Spanish Ministers, with whom she had so much influence, would be greatly facilitated. Laigues duly followed these instructions, but, although a

young and handsome man, he did not at first succeed in making a favourable impression upon the lady, who declared that he reminded her of one Bellerose, an actor noted for his insipid airs. However, she altered her tone before leaving Brussels, and, by the time she reached the frontier, as far as which Laigues escorted her, was "pleased with him in every way."<sup>1</sup>

Laigues was also pleased with her, and their mutual affection endured as long as the duchess lived and, after the death of M. de Chevreuse in 1657, was regularised by one of those *mariages de conscience* which were then the fashion.

Madame de Chevreuse returned to France on the pretext that she was covered by the general amnesty, which had been one of the conditions of the Peace of Rueil ; but, in point of fact, her name was not included in that document, as were those of all offenders of distinction ; and, though her husband and her son, the Duc de Luynes, had been making every effort to induce the Queen to recall her, her Majesty had not yet consented. However, the duchess believed that Mazarin, like Richelieu before him, would be only too ready to forget the past, if he saw that she were willing to submit to his authority, and, weary of exile and eager for repose, she was quite prepared to give him assurances on that score.

Nor did she judge wrongly. The Cardinal had recognised the vigour and fertility of her intellect in the different struggles which she had sustained against him at the time of the cabal of the "Importants," and in the intrigues which she had carried on since her departure from France, and he was most anxious to be reconciled to her and to attach her to his interests and to those of the Crown. Indeed, it was he who was the first to make overtures of friendship. On her way to Paris, Madame de Chevreuse

<sup>1</sup> Retz.

stopped at Péronne, of which her friend the Marquis, afterwards the Maréchal d'Hocquincourt, was governor. Hocquincourt was a good soldier and a brave man, but frivolous and very ready to take offence ; and during the war which had just concluded, irritated by not being treated by the Court with the consideration which he believed to be his due, he had been on the point of joining the Frondeurs, and had written to Madame de Montbazon, who was endeavouring to win him over to her party : "*Péronne est à la belle des belles.*" When, however, he learned that the Fronde was divided and that the Parlement was negotiating with the Court, he hastened to make his peace with Mazarin and promised to uphold the royal cause.

The Cardinal determined to make use of Hocquincourt to gain Madame de Chevreuse, and in a letter written from Péronne, under date April 16, 1649, the marquis renders account to Mazarin of the conversation which he had had with the lady : "I shall tell you, Monseigneur," he writes, "that when Madame de Chevreuse passed by here on her way to Paris, not desiring to lose any occasion of serving your Eminence, I made her understand that I was entirely yours, Monseigneur ; and having gently suggested to her that she should follow the same interests, I observed that she would have some disposition towards it, in case your Eminence so desired."<sup>1</sup>

Encouraged by the favourable reception which this overture had met with, Mazarin summoned Hocquincourt to Paris and sent him to Madame de Chevreuse, to urge her to accept the terms which the Court was prepared to offer her. These had already been laid before the duchess by the Cardinal's faithful henchman, Servien, in an interview which he had had with her at

<sup>1</sup> *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, tom. cxxii., cited by Chéruel, *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV.*

the Hôtel de Chevreuse, in the presence of Mathieu Molé, First President of the Parlement, and certainly did not err on the side of severity, Madame de Chevreuse being merely required to retire for a month to Dampierre, at the expiration of which period she was to write to the Queen to request permission to return to Paris.

Madame de Chevreuse showed herself animated by very different sentiments from those which she had brought back from her previous exiles ; indeed, so changed did she seem that Mazarin had at first some difficulty in persuading himself that the protestations of friendship which she addressed to him could be sincere. She did not deny having treated with the foreigner, but she demanded, as a favour, not to be more severely punished than those who, in the recent troubles, had conferred publicly with the Spaniards. "She has no doubt," wrote her secretary, l'Aulne, to Mazarin, "that the Parlement, all the Chambers assembled together, would recognise the justice of her demands ; nevertheless, it is by the kindness of the Queen that she wishes to be dispensed from the necessity of retiring to her Château of Dampierre. She would have the appearance of being treated more harshly than any one else ; and she dreads this residence, which was the first stage of her long exile."<sup>1</sup>

The Cardinal, however, intimated to the lady that some nominal punishment must necessarily precede her rehabilitation, and, after long and earnest conferences with Hocquincourt, she finally decided to submit to what was demanded of her, and on July 4, 1649, Michel Le Tellier writes to Mazarin : "Madame de Chevreuse intends to start the day after to-morrow for Dampierre,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of April 23, 1649. *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, tom. cxxii., cited by the Comte d'Haussonville, *Histoire de la réunion de la Lorraine à la France*.

very satisfied with the assurances that have been given her for her safety.”<sup>1</sup>

The letters of l'Aulne and Le Tellier and other authentic documents entirely dispose of the claim which Retz makes to have been himself the devoted protector of Madame de Chevreuse and of her daughter, the beautiful Charlotte de Lorraine, whom he has treated as scurvily in his *Mémoires* as La Rochefoucauld has Madame de Longueville in his.<sup>2</sup>

“The day on which she [Madame de Chevreuse] arrived,” he writes, “I stood sponsor with her daughter to a child who had arrived in the world very opportunely. Mlle. de Chevreuse was adorned with all the jewels she possessed: she was beautiful; while I was angry with Madame de Guémené,<sup>3</sup> who on the second day of the siege of Paris had fled in terror to Anjou. On the morrow of the baptism, an incident occurred which gave her cause to be grateful to me, and which began to make me hope for her friendship. Madame de Chevreuse had come from Brussels, and she had come without permission. The Queen was angry about it, and sent her an order to leave Paris within twenty-four hours. Laigues came to inform me of it immediately; I went with him to the Hôtel de Chevreuse, where I found the fair one [Mlle. de Chevreuse] at her toilette, in tears. I had a tender heart, and I begged Madame de Chevreuse not to obey until I had had the honour of seeing her again.”

Retz then relates that he went to consult Beaufort, who advised him to seek the intervention of Mathieu Molé. The First President comprehended his motives, and when he began to expatiate upon the necessity of

<sup>1</sup> *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, tom. cxxii., cited by Chéruef.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's "A Princess of Intrigue" (London, Hutchinson; New York, Putnam, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> Madame de Guémené and Madame de Pommereux had hitherto shared the affections of the Coadjutor.

preventing the re-establishing of *lettres de cachet*, cut him short, by saying: "It is enough, my good lord; you do not wish her to depart; she shall not depart." To which he added, in an undertone: "She has very beautiful eyes."

But, although Madame de Chevreuse certainly owed nothing at this juncture to the protection of the future Cardinal, and was, as we have seen, obliged to leave Paris for a brief space, though not until more than two months after her arrival, Retz appears to be correct enough in dating the beginning of what speedily developed into something more than friendship between him and the fair Charlotte from the return of her mother. The conduct of the duchess in this matter is the saddest episode in all her chequered history, and proves that her career of gallantry and conspiracy had ended by rendering her absolutely destitute of moral sense. Aware that Retz was by far the ablest of all the leaders of the Fronde, and that to obtain influence over him would greatly strengthen her position, she deliberately sacrificed her daughter's honour to her own ambitions, and connived at this shameful intrigue between a young girl and a high dignitary of the Church. And, so far from feeling the least shame at the odious *rôle* which she had assumed, she appears to have considered it one which reflected no small credit on her sagacity. "She [Madame de Chevreuse]," wrote Mazarin during his exile at Brühl, "told me in confidence that she held him [Retz] by means of her daughter, who conducted herself in such fashion towards the Coadjutor as to give him her love, and wean him from that which he had for Madame de Guémené. This she has repeated to me several times."

A sojourn of a month at Dampierre in the height of summer was assuredly a very mild form of expiation,

and when, at the beginning of August, Madame de Chevreuse wrote to the Queen to request permission to pay her respects to her Majesty, Anne at once accorded it, and sent Le Tellier to escort the duchess to Compiègne, where the Court then was. The observant Madame de Motteville has left us an interesting account of the meeting between Anne of Austria and her quondam favourite :

“ Madame de Chevreuse arrived at Compiègne on August 8, her face pale from recent illness, and her heart submissive, to all appearance, to all the wishes of the Queen and her Minister. She was received at the hour when the Council assembled, at which the Duc d'Orléans, *Monsieur le Prince*, and the rest of the Ministers were present. Le Tellier, who had made her peace, told me that same evening that he had great difficulty in relieving her mind of the suspicions which she entertained ; for, notwithstanding the Queen's promise of which he had been the bearer, she feared that, since she had returned to France without her Majesty's consent, she might cause her to be arrested. This princess was so weary of exile and banishments that she feared them infinitely ; and, for greater safety, she had desired that the First President should promise her as well, on behalf of the Queen, that she should be well treated. The Queen, whose habit it was only to kiss the Duchesse d'Orléans, *Mademoiselle*, and sometimes *Madame la Princesse*, in virtue of her position as her favourite, had distinguished her from the other princesses, and had been accustomed to do her this honour ; but she was now deprived of it, for the Queen desired to show her that she was sensible of what she had done contrary to her service. This princess entreated the Queen's pardon for all the past, and promised her a great fidelity for the future. Her promises were



received kindly and without reproaches, but with a very different air from the caresses which the Queen had bestowed upon her when she was satisfied with her. After having saluted the Queen and spoken a moment to the Minister, she retired ; and the Queen exclaimed to a member of the Council that she was no longer Madame de Chevreuse in any way, intending to refer particularly to her countenance, which no longer retained more than traces of her former beauty. There was a great press in the Queen's ante-chamber to see her pass ; and I remarked, from this public curiosity, how much the rumour of having done extraordinary things confers *éclat* upon people. Mlle. de Chevreuse, her daughter, whose beauty was celebrated, although it was not perfect, received great praise from those who saw her, so much does that which is new almost always please."

Gradually, Madame de Chevreuse succeeded in re-establishing herself on something approaching her old footing with the Queen, though Anne could never bring herself to treat her with the affectionate familiarity of former days ; nor does the duchess seem to have expected it. Her conduct remained very prudent and discreet. Holding a sort of middle position between the Court party and that of the malcontents, connected, by means of her daughter, with the Coadjutor, without allowing herself to be drawn into all his intrigues, of which, however, she was perfectly informed, and on terms of close friendship with so many important personages, both at home and abroad, she was very distinctly a force to be reckoned with. Mazarin did not fail to recognise it, and, as soon as he was reassured as to her real intentions, he hastened to make use of one who had so many means of serving him. He employed her especially to treat with the Spaniards and with the Duke of Lorraine, and, in the delicate negotiations which he conducted with them, never



CHARLOTTE MARIE DE LORRAINE. MLLE. DE CHEVREUSE  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



did he take a step of the least importance without consulting his former enemy, who showed herself an excellent counsellor and appears to have acted in perfectly good faith. "I afterwards saw Madame de Chevreuse," writes Le Tellier to the Cardinal, under date February 1650, "who expressed herself as very sensible of your Eminence's recollections of her. Having talked with her at length about present affairs, I found her very well disposed towards the service of the King, even in that which touches M. de Lorraine, as well as for all that which concerns the interests of your Eminence."<sup>1</sup> Madame de Chevreuse sent regularly to Mazarin the letters which she received from Charles IV., and inquired what answers she should make to them ; while, in return, the Cardinal charged her to transmit his proposals to the prince, or ordered Le Tellier to take the directions of the duchess in regard to the affairs of Lorraine. That, notwithstanding the efforts of Madame de Chevreuse, the negotiations between Charles IV. and Mazarin came to nothing, was, as the Comte d'Haussonville is careful to point out, certainly not the fault of the lady, but of the two principals, neither of whom was entirely sincere, and abated or resumed his original pretensions according as he believed himself more or less favoured by the general course of events.<sup>2</sup>

But, if, through no fault of her own, the assistance which the duchess gave Mazarin in his foreign negotiations failed to enable him to arrive at any definite result, in the sphere of home politics, becoming every day more difficult and complicated, she rendered him the most important services.

Notwithstanding the persuasions of his sister, Madame de Longueville, who possessed great influence over him,

<sup>1</sup> *Archives des Affaires étrangères*, cited by d'Haussonville.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la réunion de la Lorraine à la France*.

the victor of Rocroi and Lens, who, on the death of his father, Henri II., Prince de Condé, in December 1646, had become first Prince of the Blood, had remained faithful to his duty during the Parliamentary Fronde and had commanded the royal troops which had blockaded Paris. This reconciliation between the rival parties, however, was followed by a reconciliation in the House of Condé, and no sooner did Madame de Longueville find herself again on terms of friendship with her elder brother, than she resumed her efforts to draw him from his alliance with Mazarin. "She made him understand," writes Madame de Motteville, "that he had done wrong in separating himself from his family, who would be useful to his interests. He perceived that the Prince de Conti was obtaining great advantages at Court, and he recognised that Madame de Longueville, who had guided the latter to this result, was worth listening to and could be of use to him in many ways. In a word, he was pleased and captivated by the flattering illusions of the princess, and blood, added to policy, bound him by fresh ties."

The good understanding between *Monsieur le Prince* and the Cardinal had been merely of a temporary nature, called into being by the danger to which the royal authority had found itself exposed; and it did not long survive the restoration of order. Condé, indeed, declared publicly that he had upheld Mazarin because he had pledged his word to do so, but that, if matters took a different course, he should consider himself at perfect liberty to withdraw his protection from the Minister. His natural pride and insolence had been enormously increased by the events of the last few months, and he had begun to consider his support absolutely indispensable to the Crown. It may have been so in a military sense, but certainly not in a political one. His high rank and great territorial influence always commanded a large

following among the nobility, both at Court and in the provinces ; but he had none of the consummate tact, none of the winning personality, of a Henri de Guise, and, in spite of the glamour of his victories, he aroused no popular enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he was a powerful ally and a dangerous enemy ; and the Regent and her Minister were willing to go to great lengths to secure a continuance of his support. But no ordinary favours or concessions were likely to satisfy a man who regarded himself as the saviour of the Crown and believed that he held its fate in the hollow of his hand ; while his jealous and suspicious mind, skilfully played upon by his sister, seemed to see in every action of Mazarin a carefully calculated move to strengthen the Cardinal's position or to diminish his own prestige.

Mazarin, on his side, was not idle, and had resolved upon a move which, he hoped, would enable him to withstand even so formidable a rival as *Monsieur le Prince*. This was to attach the Vendôme family to his interests, by giving the eldest of his nieces, Laure Mancini, plus a splendid dowry, to the Duc de Vendôme's eldest son, the Duc de Mercœur, and restoring the Admiralty to the father. By this means, he intended to disarm Beaufort, whose immense popularity with the Parisians rendered him an important factor in the political situation, notwithstanding his personal ineptitude. At the same time, he proposed that Beaufort should marry Marie d'Orléans, the Duc de Longueville's daughter by his first marriage, a match which he believed would be very acceptable to the "*Roi des Halles*." For the furtherance of this scheme, the Cardinal had recourse to the assistance of Madame de Chevreuse, a life-long friend of the Vendôme family, who readily promised him her co-operation ; and, apparently at her suggestion, that of Madame de Montbazou was also secured, by the promise of a substantial pension and

the grant of a *tabouret* to her daughter, that is to say, the privilege of being seated in the Queen's presence.

Vendôme, weary of opposition to the Court, which had brought him nothing but exile and imprisonment, was willing enough to accept the good things which an alliance with the Cardinal's family would ensure him ; while the Duc de Mercœur, an amiable and pious young man, the exact antithesis of his turbulent younger brother, appeared to be as favourably impressed by the charms of Mlle. Mancini as by the magnitude of her proposed dowry. Longueville, too, raised no objection to giving his daughter to Beaufort. But, notwithstanding all the efforts of his relatives and of Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Montbazou, Beaufort absolutely refused to compromise his popularity with the mob by a reconciliation with Mazarin,<sup>1</sup> and, instead of yielding to their solicita-

<sup>1</sup> When one reads the letters of Gui Patin, it is not difficult to understand why Beaufort was unwilling to sacrifice his "Kingdom of the Markets," even for the sake of the solid advantages which Mazarin offered him. The infatuation of the lower-class Parisians, and particularly of the women for him, was extraordinary, and might have turned a far wiser head. "As he was playing tennis, four days ago," writes Patin, "the greater part of the women of the Markets went in groups to see him play and to express to him their good wishes for his prosperity. As they made some disturbance to get in, and those to whom the house belonged complained about it, he was obliged to leave the game and come himself to the door to put a stop to the fray. This, however, he was unable to do without allowing these women to enter a few at a time to see him playing. Perceiving that one of these women was watching him very attentively, he said to her: 'Well, my gossip, you wanted to come in; but what pleasure can it give you to see me play and lose my money?' To which she at once replied: 'M. de Beaufort, play boldly; my gossip here and I have brought you two hundred écus, and, if more is required, I am ready to go back and find as much again.' All the other women began to cry out that they had money at his disposal, for which he thanked them. He was visited that day by more than two thousand women. Two days afterwards, while he was passing near Saint-Eustache, a troop of women began crying out to him: 'Monsieur, do not consent to the marriage [of the Duc de Mercœur] with Mazarin's niece, whatever M. de Vendôme may do or say to you. If he casts you off, you shall want for nothing; we will give you every year a pension of 60,000 livres from the Markets,'"

tions, attached himself more closely than ever to the irreconcilable Frondeurs and publicly advertised his hostility to the Court party by provoking an affray with some of Mazarin's friends on the terrace at Renard's.<sup>1</sup>

On August 18, 1649, their Majesties returned to their capital, after an absence of seven and a half months, where the King was received, says Retz, "as kings have always been received, and always will be, that is to say, with acclamations which signify nothing." As for the Cardinal, the boatmen on the Seine gave a fête in his honour; his health was drunk in the same taverns in which his confusion had been so lately toasted, and, as he passed through the streets, he met with nothing but respectful salutations.

However, in the midst of these manifestations of public joy, the situation at Court was becoming very strained. Condé saw with jealousy and uneasiness that Mazarin was inclining more and more towards the Vendômes, between whom and the House of Condé a bitter rivalry had existed ever since the beginning of the regency, and was easily persuaded by Madame de Longueville that the alliance projected between the Duc de Mercœur and Laure Mancini was a sure proof that the Cardinal had ceased to regard *Monsieur le Prince* as his chief support, and that when Vendôme had become, by this marriage, the connexion of the Minister, he would

<sup>1</sup> Some young nobles belonging to the Court party, who included the Comte de Jarzé, a vain and foolish personage, who had had the temerity to boast, in the presence of the Queen, that Beaufort was afraid of him, had arranged to sup at Renard's. Just as they had sat down to table, Beaufort appeared upon the scene, accompanied by several of his friends and a numerous suite of pages and lackeys. Beaufort and his escort surrounded the festive board, and the duke, having informed the company that he had come to teach them not to be insolent any more, dragged the cloth from the table, upsetting all the wine, plates, and dishes over the supper-party. The latter attempted to seize their swords, but they were quickly overpowered and compelled to beat an ignominious retreat.



be more considered than any one by the King and Queen. At the same time, she reminded him that her husband had not yet obtained the government of the Pont-de-l'Arche, in Normandy, which had been promised him at the Peace of Rueil ; while, on the other hand, Vendôme was about to obtain the Admiralty, which he himself had demanded in vain on the death of his brother-in-law, the Duc de Brézé.

To the exhortations of his sister, who was fully determined on the overthrow of Mazarin, unless the Minister were prepared to be content with the mere shadow of power and surrender the substance to the House of Condé and its allies, was joined the flattery of a band of young nobles, who imitated *Monsieur le Prince's* grandiose manner, styled him "The Master," and were themselves dubbed by the people the "*petits-mâîtres*" (little masters). These young men were constantly urging Condé to play an important part in the State—a rôle for which he was not in the smallest degree fitted, since of any notion of the duties of a statesman, or of any political end or measure save his own and his family's aggrandisement, he was entirely devoid—and declaring their belief that the services he had rendered the Crown had been most inadequately recompensed. In short, a new Fronde was beginning—a Fronde of the princes and the "*petits-mâîtres*," which had not the excuse of the old Fronde, since its origin was merely the ambition and rivalry of the great families of the realm, though it was sustained by the turbulent and intriguing section of the latter, who desired at all costs to break the peace and overthrow Mazarin.

Meanwhile, the Cardinal, aware of the cabals which threatened him, was pressing on the marriage of his niece with the Duc de Mercœur, which was to secure him the powerful support of Vendôme, and, he hoped, the

neutrality of Beaufort. All the preliminaries were satisfactorily arranged, and the celebration of the marriage was fixed for September 19, 1649. Condé, however, urged on by his sister, was now determined to employ every means in his power to prevent an alliance which would render Mazarin less dependent and Vendôme more powerful; and when, on the 14th, the Cardinal asked him to sign the marriage-contract, he brusquely declined, and, at the same time, demanded the fulfilment of the promise made to the Duc de Longueville of the government of the Pont-de-l'Arche. Mazarin refused, reminding the prince that, although the Pont-de-l'Arche had certainly been promised the duke during the negotiations at Rueil, it had been agreed that subsequently a pretext should be found for not conferring the post. Upon which Condé lost his temper altogether, reproached Mazarin bitterly with his broken faith, and, on taking his departure, "*lui passa la main devant le nez, comme pour lui faire une—*," and cried: "Adieu, Mars!" Later in the day, in response to the conciliatory overtures which Mazarin had hastened to make to him, he sent to inform his Eminence that, since he had failed in his word, he might henceforth consider him as his bitterest enemy.

As soon as the rupture between *Monsieur le Prince* and the Minister became known, the chiefs of the Fronde hastened to the Hôtel de Condé to offer their services, as did the majority of the courtiers. Every one believed the fall of Mazarin assured, for an alliance between Condé and his partisans and the Fronde would be irresistible. The prince, however, could not make up his mind to the proposed alliance, though he promised to give the matter careful consideration and inform the Frondeurs of his decision two days hence. In the interval, however, Condé, who desired to enslave Mazarin and not to drive him away, came to terms with the Cardinal, and, in

consideration of the Pont-de-l'Arche being given to Longueville, of the Queen's promise to keep the Admiralty in her own hands, and of the indefinite postponement of the Mercœur-Mancini marriage, consented to a reconciliation (September 18).

This reconciliation, however, was but a momentary truce. A day or two later, negotiations between Condé and the Fronde were reopened, and it was arranged that the prince should present to the Parlement a request that the decree of 1617, which forbade, under the severest penalties, any foreigner holding office under the Crown, should be put into force against Mazarin. The Cardinal, recognising the hopelessness of contending against the united forces of Condé, Retz, Beaufort, and their followers, decided to bow before the storm, and to make a surrender so absolute as to satisfy even *Monsieur le Prince* and his ambitious sister. Accordingly, having secured the consent of the Regent, he, on October 2, drew up and signed a written agreement, by which he undertook that no one should be appointed to any important post in the Government, the Church, the Diplomatic Service, the Army, or the Royal Household unless Condé had been first consulted, and undertook to sustain "everywhere and always" the interests of *Monsieur le Prince*, "to live with him in perfect intelligence," and not to arrange any marriage for his nephew or nieces without his consent. On which conditions, Condé graciously consented to guarantee the apparently humbled Cardinal his friendship and protection.

The effect of this agreement was to make Condé almost a dictator ; but, as the crafty Italian had, of course, foreseen, the victory was one which was likely to cost the haughty prince dear. In the first place, he alienated the Frondeurs, who now perceived that Condé had used them merely for his own ends, and, these once accom-

plished, had abandoned them without compunction. In the second, though the precise terms of the agreement were not made public, it was common knowledge that Condé had not consented to a reconciliation with the Cardinal except at the price of great concessions—a fact which could not fail to arouse the jealousy of Orléans, already inclined to take umbrage at the influence of *Monsieur le Prince*. In these circumstances, Mazarin felt that he could afford to stomach the affront he had received and await an opportunity for revenge.

## CHAPTER XVI

Indignation of the Frondeurs against Condé—Secret conferences between them and Mazarin, who, however, declines to commit himself—Madame de Chevreuse determines to lend her support to the Cardinal, and counsels him to enter into an alliance with the Frondeurs and to arrest Condé—Pride and arrogance of *Monsieur le Prince* and Madame de Longueville—The "War of the *Tabourets*"—Attempt of the Marquis de Jarzé to supplant Mazarin in the affections of the Queen—Pretended assassination of Guy Joly and attack upon Condé's coach—Prosecution of Retz and Beaufort for the attempted assassination of *Monsieur le Prince*—The "abduction" of the Duc de Richelieu—Interview between Madame de Chevreuse, Mazarin, and the Queen—Secret visits of Retz to the Palais-Royal—An alliance between the Court and the Old Fronde is negotiated—The arrest of the Princes.

ONE of the first results of the apparent reconciliation of Condé with Mazarin was the open rupture of the prince and the Frondeurs. They accused him loudly of treason, and, some days after the signature of the agreement we have mentioned, secret conferences took place between the Cardinal and the chiefs of the Fronde. Under date October 4, 1649, Mazarin wrote in his *Carnets*: "M. de Vendôme, after having spoken of his affair this morning, told me that never had there been a more favourable occasion for drawing away M. de Beaufort and giving him entirely to the Queen, and that the Président de Bellièvre and the Coadjutor were quite resolved upon it."<sup>1</sup>

In these negotiations, however, Mazarin was always very reserved. He did not repulse the advances of the Frondeurs, but he distrusted their sincerity, and feared

<sup>1</sup> *Carnet XIII.*

a *rapprochement* between Condé and Beaufort, or between the prince's younger brother Conti and Retz. He accordingly declined to commit himself, affected an absolute submission to the wishes of Condé, and allowed the Frondeurs to insult his abasement. He himself wrote in his *Carnets*: "Madame de Montbazon says that *Monsieur le Prince* hates the Cardinal to the last extremity, speaks of him as a slave who can refuse him nothing, and whom he will drive away when he pleases."

But, if Mazarin was very much on his guard with the Frondeurs, he felt that he could afford to be more open with Madame de Chevreuse, and it was upon her assistance that his chief hopes of freeing himself from the tyranny of Condé reposed. He was aware that she exercised a great influence in the counsels of the Old Fronde, and over Madame de Montbazon, who governed Beaufort. He knew that she dominated Retz through her daughter, and that she was on terms of intimate friendship with the Duc d'Orléans. And he believed that she, at least, was perfectly sincere in her professions of friendship.

Political calculation and private resentment alike inclined Madame de Chevreuse to lend her support to Mazarin in his struggle against Condé. She was quick to recognise that the arrogant young prince, despite his military genius and the political power which he had just usurped, would in the end be no match for the skill and astuteness of his adversary, sustained as the latter was by the inflexible resolution of the Queen; and she accordingly decided that her own interests would best be served by an alliance with the Cardinal. Moreover, she shared the old enmity of the House of Lorraine to the Bourbons, and had not forgiven the Dowager-Princesse de Condé and Madame de Longueville for their triumph over Madame de Montbazon and herself at the beginning of the Regency.

Without allowing himself to be guided by Madame de Chevreuse, Mazarin listened willingly to her proposals, and had with the duchess several personal interviews, the result of which he has recorded in his *carnets* : "Among all the persons," he writes, "who have spoken to or communicated with me at this juncture to oblige me to consent to the *abattement* of *Monsieur le Prince* and to the bringing over of the entire party of M. de Beaufort, of the Coadjutor, and of the three ladies,<sup>1</sup> Madame de Chevreuse has conversed with me at length on two occasions, forgetting nothing ; firstly, to make me understand that it was a sure coup, and, afterwards, that it was an infallible means to re-establish the King's authority in Paris and in all the provinces ; that they would answer to me for the Parlement of Paris and for the pacification of Bordeaux (which shows me that the disturbance there is connected with the evil-intentioned of Paris) ; that the finances would be immediately re-established ; that, with it, the peace would undoubtedly follow ;<sup>2</sup> that I should be able to take vengeance on *Monsieur le Prince*, who had offended me out of mere wantonness, and that, if we did not promptly take some measures to oppose his elevation, he would soon be master of everything ; that *Monsieur le Prince* was not what he was believed to be, that he was strong among the weak, but very weak among the strong, and that it was there that he was finding resistance."

Madame de Chevreuse was right when she declared that it was among the strong that Condé was finding resistance. Since the Cardinal's surrender the pride and arrogance of *Monsieur le Prince* had known no bounds. He seemed, we are told, to take a positive pleasure in

<sup>1</sup> Probably Madame de Chevreuse, Madame de Montbazon, and Anne de Gonzague, Princesse Palatine.

<sup>2</sup> Because France would then be enabled to prosecute the war vigorously.

wounding the susceptibilities of every one with whom he came in contact, and assumed such a supercilious air and so mocking a tone that people could not fail to take offence. In the visits which were paid him he did not attempt to disguise his ennui, and no matter how exalted the rank of his visitors, they were obliged to wait an inordinately long time in his ante-chamber, and very frequently were sent away without being granted an interview.

All this naturally did not tend to reconcile the nobility to the domination of Condé, and their ill-humour was changed into active hostility when the prince demanded and obtained for the wife of La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Longueville's *protégée*, the widowed Marquise de Pons, the coveted honour of the *tabouret*, although they had no better claim to the privilege of being seated in the presence of the Queen than any other lady of equal rank. So great was the indignation, that a petition, signed by an immense number of the nobility, including some of the most illustrious names in France, was presented to the Queen, setting forth their objections to the *tabourets* just conferred, and begging her to revoke them without delay. Condé warmly defended his sister's *protégée*. The *noblesse* grew more insistent, and held several meetings at the Maréchal de l'Hôpital's hotel. Finally, the Queen and the Cardinal, who asked nothing better than to throw on Condé the odium of favours which had provoked such widespread resentment, and to give themselves the merit of suppressing them, yielded to the demand of the nobles, and both *tabourets* were withdrawn, to the intense chagrin of *Monsieur le Prince* and his sister, who found that for once they had overreached themselves. The check which they had received, however, instead of serving as a useful lesson, only spurred them on to fresh indiscretions.



Aware that the chief obstacle to the despotism which he desired to exercise at Court was the affection of the Queen for the Cardinal, Condé determined to endeavour to divert her Majesty's affection into another channel, and selected for this purpose the Marquis de Jarzé, the egregious personage whom we have already seen figuring in the fracas with Beaufort on the terrace at Renard's. After the return of the Court to Paris, Jarzé professed the most absolute devotion for Anne of Austria, and protested that "there was nothing so hazardous that he would not undertake if she commanded him." Her Majesty appeared to listen with pleasure to these bravadoes, which so increased the "*petit-maitre's*" presumption, that he ventured to declare his love. Having gained over to his cause Anne of Austria's first waiting-woman, Madame de Beauvais—a lady who, it may be mentioned, is credited with the distinction of being the first to triumph over the virtue of Louis XIV.—he addressed a love-letter to the Queen, which the *femme de chambre* deposited one evening in a conspicuous place on her royal mistress's dressing-table. Anne was so annoyed that she could not sleep all night, and next morning consulted Mazarin, who counselled her to treat Jarzé with the contempt which his presumption merited, and administer to him a public rebuff. The Queen followed his advice,<sup>1</sup> and Jarzé was compelled to quit the Court amidst general ridicule. Instead of accepting the defeat of his little scheme, Condé complained bitterly of the dismissal of Jarzé, declared that "the old gallant had driven away the new," and insisted on his discomfited *protégé* being permitted to reappear at Court, threatening that, if this were not done, he would take him into his

<sup>1</sup> A comparison of Mazarin's *Carnets* and the *Mémoires* of Madame de Motteville show that the Queen used to Jarzé almost the identical words which the Cardinal had suggested to her.

own service and bring him every day "by his fist" to the Palais-Royal. In short, he compelled the Queen to receive the man who had affronted her, though the ladies declared with one voice that "there was no private gentlewoman even to whom, in an affair of this nature, one ought not to leave full liberty to act as she pleased."

In the meanwhile, a more serious matter was engaging public attention. In the autumn, owing to the enormous increase in the sale of contraband salt, the farmers of the taxes found themselves unable to pay the *rentes* of the Hôtel de Ville, which were secured upon the proceeds of the *gabelle*, or salt-tax, and from which the majority of the bourgeoisie drew their support; and the Government, already at its wits' end to find money wherewith to carry on the war, was powerless to assist them. The distress caused by the suspension of payment was great, and the exasperated *rentiers* held stormy meetings at the Hôtel de Ville, appointed syndics to support their demands, and accepted the assistance of Retz and Beaufort, who were naturally delighted to find so excellent an occasion for asserting themselves. These worthies endeavoured to transform the agitation, at one stroke, into a fresh revolt by the pretended assassination of Guy Joly, one of the syndics of the *rentiers*. But the affair was badly managed, and, later on the same day, Condé's coach was fired upon, as it was crossing the Pont-Neuf, and one of his servants severely wounded.

As it is usual to throw the responsibility of such deeds upon those who profit by them, certain writers have attributed the attack upon Condé's coach—the prince himself was not in it—to Mazarin, but this hypothesis is now generally discredited. However, if the Cardinal had had no connexion with the affair, he did not hesitate to take the fullest possible advantage of the weapon it had placed in his hands, and artfully fanned the indignation of

Condé, with the object of causing an irreparable rupture between the two Frondes, whose union it was his great object to prevent, and preparing the downfall of the prince.

Disdaining to prosecute the authors of the outrage, who, as a matter of fact, had taken to flight, Condé resolved to take vengeance upon the chiefs of the Frondeurs, who, he believed, had set them on ; and Beaufort and Retz were brought to trial before the Parlement of Paris, though there was really nothing to connect either the duke or the Coadjutor, unscrupulous as they both were, with an act as impolitic as it was criminal. The excitement in Paris was intense. The populace declared for the accused and surrounded the Palais de Justice, shouting : "*Vive Beaufort ! Vive le coadjuteur !*" The court and hall of the palace were thronged with the relatives, friends, and servants of both accuser and accused. Hundreds of Condé's followers appeared on the first day of the proceedings, with the object of overawing the judges ; while the Frondeur nobles sent even into the provinces to bring up their retainers. Both parties came armed to the teeth, and not a member of the Parlement ventured to discharge his duty without a dagger concealed beneath his gown for his own protection, since there was no knowing at what moment the trial might not develop into a sanguinary *mêlée*.

The investigation proceeded but slowly, as the Frondeurs endeavoured to prolong the affair, in order to efface the first impressions, which were unfavourable to them, and charged the First President with having received an immense bribe from the Government. This matter was still under discussion when the court adjourned for the Christmas vacation.

Thoroughly alarmed at the position in which they found themselves, Retz and Beaufort had made repeated

efforts to appease the wrath of Condé, offering to furnish him with convincing proofs of their innocence, and to enter into an alliance with him, on practically any terms he might choose to dictate. But the prince's evil genius, Madame de Longueville, who had a grievance of her own against Retz, frustrated all hope of an accommodation. Foiled in their efforts to propitiate Condé, the duke and the Coadjutor were forced to the conclusion that their only hope of salvation lay in a reconciliation with the Cardinal, for the zeal with which the Court was urging on the prosecution showed them plainly that, unless they were prepared to enter into an alliance with Mazarin to crush Condé, Mazarin intended to use Condé to crush them. The negotiations with the Cardinal which had been going on since the beginning of October, chiefly through the medium of Madame de Chevreuse, began therefore to assume a more definite shape. Nevertheless, they still made comparatively little progress, since Mazarin, aware that the advantage now lay with him, was disinclined to come to an arrangement, save on his own terms. However, before the trial was resumed, Condé had succeeded in filling the cup of his offences full to the brim, and had decided both the Queen and the Cardinal that at any cost an end must be made of the intolerable pretensions of *Monsieur le Prince*.

We have spoken in a previous chapter of the importance of the government of Le Havre, which belonged to the young Duc de Richelieu, although, as he was only in his nineteenth year and still under the guardianship of his aunt, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, the garrison was commanded by a veteran officer named Sainte-Maure, appointed by that lady. Condé was exceedingly anxious to see Le Havre in the hands of a partisan of his own, since, in that event, he would be supreme in Normandy, all the other fortresses in that province being under the

On New Year's Day, Madame de Chevreuse presented herself at the Palais-Royal, and was admitted to the Queen's *petit cabinet*, where she found Mazarin with her Majesty. The Cardinal at once beckoned her aside, and, after expressing his indignation at the conduct of *Monsieur le Prince*, which, he declared, had reached such a point that the Crown itself would be menaced, if it were permitted to continue, said to her : "Madame, you love the Queen ; is it possible that you cannot bring your friends over to her side ?" "The way ?" replied the duchess, scornfully. "The Queen is no longer Queen ; she is the very humble servant of *Monsieur le Prince* !" "*Mon Dieu !*" rejoined the Cardinal. "If one could be sure of people, much might be accomplished. M. de Beaufort is devoted to Madame de Montbazon ; Madame de Montbazon to Vigneul, and the Coadjutor. . . ." Here his Eminence paused and regarded his companion with a meaning smile. "I understand," said she, "and I answer for him and for her."

The Cardinal glanced in the direction of the Queen and nodded his head, which showed Madame de Chevreuse that the conversation with the Minister had been arranged between them. He then suggested that the duchess should speak herself to her Majesty, and, as soon as the other persons present had retired, Madame de Chevreuse approached the Queen and observed that she appeared sad. Anne replied that she had reason to be so, being abandoned and persecuted by every one. The duchess then said that, if she would accept their friendship, she would find the chiefs of the Fronde loyal subjects, who asked nothing better than to serve her, and that the only reason which prevented them from paying her their court was the belief that the Cardinal had prejudiced her mind against them. The Queen answered that persons could not be her servants who were not those of the Cardinal



**JEAN PAUL DE GONDI, AFTERWARDS CARDINAL DE RETZ**  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT



also ; upon which Madame de Chevreuse declared, that if the Cardinal would deign to take the Frondeurs under his protection, they would be delighted to become his good friends and allies. However, to make quite sure, she would, with her Majesty's permission, sound their inclinations and report to her upon the matter the following night. To this Anne consented, but charged the duchess on no account to let it be suspected that she was aware of the negotiation.

It must have seemed to Madame de Chevreuse as though the joyous days of her youth had returned to find herself once more conspiring with the Queen. She carried out the mission with which she had charged herself with the utmost tact and discretion, and the following evening returned in triumph to the Palais-Royal and informed Anne that Retz, the moving spirit of the Fronde, only awaited a gracious message from her to come in person to assure her of his devotion, and that, the Coadjutor once reconciled with the Court, the other chiefs of the party would follow his example.

Anne no longer hesitated, and, taking up a pen, wrote the following note, which she handed to Madame de Chevreuse to give to Retz :

"I cannot believe, notwithstanding the past and the present, that *M. le Coadjuteur* is unfaithful to me. I desire to see him, without the knowledge of any one, save Madame and Mlle. de Chevreuse. The signature of this will be his security.

" ANNE "

On her return to the Hôtel de Chevreuse, the duchess found Retz awaiting her. She handed him the Queen's note, after reading which, he agreed to do as her Majesty desired, although, he tells us, Mlle. de Chevreuse endea-



voured to dissuade him, in the belief that a trap was being laid for his right reverend person. "She did not wish at first to show her feelings in the presence of her mother, but was unable in the end to restrain herself." He then wrote to the Queen, assuring her that there had never been a moment in his existence in which he had not been faithful ; that he should esteem himself only too happy to die for her service, and that, "without a thought for his safety, he would proceed to any spot which her Majesty might appoint."<sup>1</sup>

The following morning, Madame de Chevreuse carried this note to the Queen, who, having read it, desired her to tell the coadjutor to come at midnight to the Cloître Saint-Honoré, where she would send some one to meet him. Thither Retz repaired, "disguised as a cavalier," and was met by Gabouri, usher to the Queen, who conducted him, by a private staircase, to her Majesty's oratory, where Anne was awaiting him. "She testified to me," writes Retz, "all the kindness that the hatred that she entertained for *Monsieur le Prince* and her attachment for the Cardinal Mazarin could allow her. The latter appeared to me to be greater than the other ; and I believe that, in speaking of the civil war and of the friendship that she had for me, she repeated a score of times : '*Le pauvre M. le Cardinal !*' Presently Mazarin himself came in, and," continues Retz, "begged the Queen to permit him to fail in respect towards her and embrace me in her presence." He then declared that he was most distressed that he was unable to give M. le Coadjuteur his own cardinal's hat, which he knew to be the goal of that worthy's ambition, and spoke of the other favours and benefits with which the Queen intended to reward his loyalty. Retz replied that the only recompense he desired was the honour of serving the Queen and saving the

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*.

Crown, upon which, according to him, Mazarin turned to Anne and begged her to command him to accept the next French nomination to the cardinalate. The Coadjutor again affected to disclaim all desire for his personal aggrandizement, but asked that posts of importance should be conferred upon his friends, which, he assured them, would place him under a greater obligation than ten cardinal's hats.

The first conference of the Coadjutor with the Queen and the Cardinal was followed by another, in the same place and at the same hour. Retz had also several interviews with Mazarin in his cabinet at the Palais-Royal, in which Laigues and Noirmoutier took part; while Madame de Chevreuse went busily to and fro between the parties, smoothing over the difficulties which arose.

In a few days the alliance between the Court and the Old Fronde was an accomplished fact. It was arranged that Condé, Conti, and Longueville should be arrested, if possible together; while their party was to be crushed by the seizure of Madame de Longueville, La Rochefoucauld, Bouillon, and Turenne. In return for the quashing of the proceedings against himself and Beaufort, and for suitable compensation for them and the other leaders of the party, the Coadjutor agreed to answer for the tranquillity of Paris.

It is improbable that the conditions of this alliance were ever committed to writing, or even precisely stipulated, but some are indicated by Retz in his *Mémoires*, and by Priolo, who enjoyed Mazarin's confidence, in his *De Rebus Gallicis*.

Beaufort was not admitted to the secret, because they feared his indiscretion, but, as his subsequent support was necessary, it was arranged that Vendôme should be given the Admiralty and that Beaufort should have the reversion of this office. His elder brother, the Duc de

Mercœur, was to be appointed viceroy of Catalonia ; Noirmoutier and Brissac were promised important governments ; Retz was to have the next French nomination to the cardinalate ; Laigues, the lover of Madame de Chevreuse, was to have the charge of captain of the young Duc d'Anjou's bodyguards, of which Jarzé had been deprived after his insolence to the Queen ; and it is certain that the duchess, in providing for her new admirer, did not forget her old one, Châteauneuf, since, in the following March, the Seals were taken away from Séguier and given to him.

Before, however, the princes could be arrested, it was judged necessary to secure the consent of the Duc d'Orléans. This presented considerable difficulties, since, though the imperious manners of Condé had deeply offended *Monsieur* and he was known to be very jealous of the great power now exercised by the first Prince of the Blood, he had for several years past been entirely governed by his unworthy favourite, the Abbé de la Rivière, who had recently allied himself with the Condés, seduced by *Monsieur le Prince's* pledge to support his claims to a cardinal's hat. It was impossible, therefore, to count upon *Monsieur*, unless he could be separated from his favourite. To accomplish this, Mazarin had recourse to the good offices of Madame de Chevreuse, whose old friendship with Orléans, he knew, could not fail to be of service in this emergency. The duchess readily undertook the task, which was facilitated by an intrigue of the Luxembourg.

*Monsieur* happened at this time to be desperately enamoured of a certain Mlle. de Saugeon, one of his wife's maids-of-honour, who, however, had resisted his importunities and fled for shelter to the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, where she announced her intention of taking the veil. The duke was furious and tried to compel the Carmelites to send the girl away, but they had admitted her at the request of the Dowager-

Princesse de Condé, one of the chief benefactresses of their convent, and refused. Now, La Rivière, far from sympathising with his patron's distress, had affected to turn it into ridicule, possibly with the object of conciliating the Duchess d'Orléans, who regarded him with a none too favourable eye ; and Madame de Chevreuse persuaded *Monsieur* that the abbé had himself counselled the flight of Mlle. de Saugeon, and arranged it in conjunction with his allies the Condés, from fear that, if the lady yielded to the prince's solicitations, he might find in her a dangerous rival in his Royal Highness's favour.

Madame de Chevreuse's efforts were ably seconded by the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. That lady happened to have great influence over Mlle. Saugeon's confessor, Père Léon, a Carmelite monk, "who had at least as much ambition as he had piety,"<sup>1</sup> and, by means of this holy man, succeeded in reassuring the conscience of the fair fugitive and in persuading her to return to the Palais-Royal. Moreover, when the girl threatened to seek refuge again with the Carmelites, if *Monsieur* renewed his importunities, Madame d'Aiguillon promised to close this asylum to her. "If *Monsieur* approves," writes Mazarin in his *Carnets*, "Madame d'Aiguillon will endeavour to arrange that the Carmelites will themselves prevail upon Saugeon not to return to their convent."

At the same time, the Queen, who, acting on Mazarin's advice, had been flattering Orléans and gradually attaching him more and more to her interests, worked to prejudice him against La Rivière ; and then, when he judged the ground had been sufficiently prepared, the Cardinal himself began accumulating accusations against the favourite, blending truth and falsehood in so skilful a manner that *Monsieur* was completely deceived, and, convinced that the abbé was sacrificing his interests

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Motteville.

to those of Condé, promised to dismiss him from his service.

The influence which La Rivière had so long exercised over this feeble prince once destroyed, the latter, already, as we have seen, irritated against Condé, speedily yielded to the instances of the Queen, Madame de Chevreuse, and Mazarin, and consented to the measures they contemplated.

Notwithstanding the secrecy with which all these negotiations were carried on, rumours concerning them reached Condé. He determined to assure himself of the truth, and one day at the Palais-Royal, fixing his piercing blue eyes on Mazarin, he inquired abruptly if it were true that he received nocturnal visits from the Coadjutor, disguised. The crafty Italian, however, bore without flinching the scrutiny of the prince, and his answer appears to have dispelled completely the latter's suspicions. "A pretty figure," said he, laughing heartily, "the Coadjutor would make, with white plumes and his bandy legs in the dress of a cavalier. If he comes to visit me in such guise, I promise to inform your Highness, so that your Highness may have the diversion of seeing him."<sup>1</sup>

All difficulties being now removed, the execution of the *coup d'état* was fixed for January 18, 1650. A meeting of the Council, which would assure the attendance of Condé, Conti, and Longueville, was summoned for the evening of that day; and at this all three princes were arrested and conveyed to the Château of Vincennes.

The arrest was carried out so quietly that the princes' attendants were still waiting for them in the courtyard of the palace, when a messenger was sent to inform them that their masters were prisoners at Vincennes. Although taken completely by surprise, Condé's partisans resolved to make an effort. One body went to the Val-de-Grâce,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Duchesse de Nemours.*

with the intention of carrying off Mazarin's nieces and holding them as hostages ; but the Cardinal, foreseeing the possibility of such a design, had sent for the girls some hours before, and placed them in safety in the Palais-Royal. Another party, headed by Montmorency-Boutteville, afterwards the celebrated Maréchal de Luxembourg, endeavoured to excite an insurrection among the populace, by galloping through the streets in the vicinity of the Pont Notre-Dame, crying out that it was Beaufort who had been arrested. The loyal subjects of "*le Roi des Halles*" came swarming from their dingy lairs, burning to avenge their Sovereign. But, warned of this, Retz obliged Beaufort, who had only just been informed of the arrest of the princes, to mount his horse and perambulate the streets, escorted by a number of servants bearing torches to show their master ; and the tumult speedily subsided. Such, indeed, was the unpopularity of Condé among the Parisians, owing to his conduct in the recent war and his persecution of those popular idols, Beaufort and Retz, that the people, so far from resenting his arrest, hailed it with acclamations ; and bonfires were everywhere lighted, round which gathered excited crowds, singing and dancing and discharging their rusty arquebuses in the air.

Nor were these rejoicings confined to the city. The *salons* of the Palais-Royal were thronged with nobles and gentlemen of the Fronde, who had come to offer their services to the Queen and Mazarin. "On entering the Queen's apartments," writes Madame de Motteville, "I was astonished to behold so many new faces. They were entirely filled by the Frondeurs. Each held his sword in his hand (sheathed, however), and all were vowing that they were good servants to the King, and were about to be defenders of the Queen and of the power of the State."

## CHAPTER XVII

Expedition of the Court to Normandy—Efforts of Mazarin to attach the Old Fronde more closely to him—Unceasing demands of Madame de Chevreuse on behalf of her friends—Châteauneuf restored to his former office of Keeper of the Seals—Anxiety of Mazarin to retain the goodwill of the duchess—Insurrection of Bordeaux—Departure of the Court for Guienne—Retz demands his nomination to the cardinalate—Madame de Chevreuse warmly supports his claim—Determination of Mazarin not to accord the nomination—Machinations of the Coadjutor against the Cardinal thwarted by Madame de Chevreuse—Probable explanation of her conduct at this juncture.

THE arrest of the princes was far from terminating the struggle between the Court and the New Fronde. The partisans of Condé sought an asylum in the provinces : Turenne and La Moussaie at Stenai, Tavannes in Burgundy, and the Duc de Bouillon in the Limousin ; while Madame de Longueville fled into her husband's government of Normandy and endeavoured to raise the whole province in insurrection. The situation in Normandy occasioned Mazarin great uneasiness, for though, thanks to the firm attitude adopted by the Parlement of Normandy, the duchess was obliged to abandon her intention of making Rouen a centre of resistance to the royal authority, and the Duc de Richelieu, bribed by the Queen's offer to recognise his marriage, declined to admit her to Le Havre, she succeeded in establishing herself in the citadel of Dieppe ; while the Marquis de Chamboy, deputy-governor of the Pont-de-l'Arche, declared for the party of the princes and proceeded to terrorise all the surrounding country.

The Cardinal therefore decided that, notwithstanding the severity of the weather and the fact that an epidemic of typhus fever was raging at Rouen, their Majesties must proceed thither as speedily as possible and restore order. It was, as he pointed out to the Council, the only means of assuring the relations of the capital with the Lower Seine, and, in consequence, the arrival of the corn and other provisions which were drawn from Normandy. If the Pont-de-l'Arche were left in the power of the rebellious Chamboy, communications would be intercepted, and Paris threatened by famine.

Accordingly, on February 1, their Majesties left Paris, accompanied by the Cardinal and nearly the whole Court, including *la Grande Mademoiselle*, who tells us that she experienced "real grief at thus quitting Paris, at a season which was more suitable for dancing than for travelling." The troops which accompanied the King consisted merely of forty men of the light cavalry, thirty-eight Guards, and as many gendarmes, commanded by the Comte d'Harcourt, which seemed a very inadequate force for the reduction of the strongholds in the hands of the partisans of the princes, the principal object of the journey. "But," observes Madame de Motteville, "the authority of legitimate power often equals the strength of the largest battalion."

Before starting for Normandy, Mazarin endeavoured to attach more closely to himself the Old Fronde, which had assisted him to triumph over the party of the princes, but which was selling its support very dearly. He gave a valuable abbey to Pierre de Longueil, one of the chiefs of the Parliamentary Frondeurs, and a pension of a thousand écus to the Sieur de la Louvière, eldest son of another Parliamentary firebrand, Broussel. He also promised Montrésor the first abbey which should become vacant, and, in the meanwhile, a considerable pension,



and, to keep Madame de Chevreuse in good humour, assured her that Châteauneuf should be restored to his former office of Keeper of the Seals with the least possible delay.

During the absence of the Regent, it had been decided that the Duc d'Orléans should remain in Paris, furnished with the most extensive powers ; but Mazarin took care to leave behind also his faithful henchman, Michel Le Tellier, with instructions to keep a very watchful eye upon his Royal Highness. As a hostage for the good behaviour of the Frondeurs, the Cardinal carried off with him the Marquis de Noirmoutier.

On February 15, their Majesties made their entry into Rouen, where the sight of their little Sovereign, who had braved the inclemency of the weather and the danger of contagion in order to maintain his authority, excited the wildest enthusiasm among the citizens. On the following day, the Pont-de-l'Arche surrendered without a blow being struck, and then, in rapid succession, all the other fortresses in Normandy in the hands of Condé's partisans, with the exception of Dieppe, made their submission, their governors being, in most cases, replaced by devoted servants of the Crown. The Queen sent orders to Madame de Longueville to leave Dieppe and retire to one of her husband's châteaux, promising that she should remain there unmolested. But the princess, who "felt herself capable of great enterprises," excused herself from obeying the royal command on the plea of illness ; and her Majesty was obliged to send the Marquis du Plessis-Bellièvre to Dieppe, with orders to take command of the citizen militia of the town and lay siege to the château. Fearful of being taken prisoner, for the place was but ill provisioned for a siege, and must sooner or later be reduced by famine, in the night of February 8-9 the princess effected a romantic escape, and, after many

adventures, succeeded in gaining Rotterdam, whence she made her way to Stenai, to join Turenne. Upon her departure, the château surrendered, and, all resistance to the King's authority in Normandy being now at an end, the Court was able to return to Paris.

Here, however, Mazarin learned that, though in most parts of the country the attempts at rebellion made by the partisans of the princes had been speedily subdued, Burgundy, where the Duc de Vendôme had been appointed governor in place of Condé, was still in a state of unrest ; and he accordingly decided to conduct the young King to that province, as he had to Normandy.

Before leaving Paris, the Cardinal again took precautions to assure himself of the fidelity of the chiefs of the Old Fronde, who, he perceived, were at pains to ingratiate themselves with *Monsieur* and were obtaining great influence over the mind of that feeble prince. We have already seen that he had accorded pensions to several, but their greed was insatiable. Madame de Chevreuse demanded without ceasing favours for her friends, and was particularly importunate in regard to Châteauneuf. That personage had now passed his seventieth year, but he was still in the enjoyment of the most vigorous health and burning to play the important part in politics which had been so long denied him. Mazarin, who had always greatly dreaded his return to public life, since he was the only man whose experience and abilities entitled him to be regarded as a potential rival for the post of Prime Minister, was naturally most reluctant to gratify his ambition, the more so since it involved the sacrifice of the Chancellor Séguier, who had been a docile instrument of his policy. But there can be no doubt that, in co-operating with him against Condé and securing him the support of the Old Fronde, Madame de Chevreuse had obtained from the Cardinal

a formal engagement in favour of Châteauneuf, and the necessity of conciliating the duchess and her friends triumphed over every other consideration. And so, on March 1, the Queen sent La Vrillière, one of the Secretaries of State, to request Séguier to deliver up the Seals, which she delivered on the morrow to Châteauneuf. The disgraced Minister retired to Pontoise, and afterwards to Rosny, the estate of his son-in-law, the Duc de Sully.

Having left behind him Le Tellier and Servien, who, he hoped, would be able to counteract the influence of the rehabilitated Châteauneuf with *Monsieur*, Mazarin set out with the Court for Burgundy. During his absence, he was unceasingly occupied in cementing his alliance with the Coadjutor and Beaufort, and, above all, with Madame de Chevreuse. The letters which he addressed to that lady were couched in a tone of obsequious politeness, and attest the anxiety of the writer to preserve the good-will of the duchess and "the honour of her friendship," which, he assures her, "he will endeavour to merit more and more by all kinds of services."

Madame de Chevreuse, however, was not the woman to be contented with mere protestations of devotion. Already she had demanded and obtained for Châteauneuf his restoration to his former office of Keeper of the Seals, but she was surrounded by many other favourites, who clamoured for pensions and governments, and whose claims she was equally pledged to satisfy. One of the greediest of these was her lover, Geoffroy de Laigues, a professional intriguer, "whose rôle was to meddle with everything."<sup>1</sup> The duchess had obtained for Laigues the charge of captain of the Duc d'Anjou's guards, but as, owing to the impoverished condition of the Treasury, the Household of the young prince had not yet been

<sup>1</sup> Motteville.

formed, she insisted that, in the meanwhile, a pension should be given him ; and one of ten thousand livres was accordingly granted.

Another favourite of Madame de Chevreuse, the Marquis de Noirmoutier, to wit, was more difficult to satisfy. The duchess had demanded for him a government, but it was not easy to find one worthy of his acceptance. It appears from Mazarin's correspondence that he had set his heart upon that of Thionville, but, though the Cardinal declares that he had made "every possible effort" to obtain this for him, he was unsuccessful. Then the harassed Minister entered into negotiations with La Tour, the governor of Arras, with the object of inducing him to surrender his charge, in return for a handsome monetary compensation, and we find him urging Le Tellier "to hasten this affair by every means that he may judge suitable." But La Tour could not be persuaded to surrender Arras, and Mazarin was obliged to offer Noirmoutier the government of Charleville and Mont-Olympe, which he graciously condescended to accept.

These details show what embarrassment the alliance of the Frondeurs, and particularly of the personal friends of Madame de Chevreuse, were occasioning Mazarin ; and even at this price he was far from being able to reckon upon their fidelity.

The appearance of the young King in Burgundy produced the result anticipated ; no resistance was offered except at Bellegarde, which capitulated after a brief siege, and by April 29, three months after the arrest of the princes, Mazarin was able to write to Le Tellier : "Of all the great establishments which they possess, which I calculate at four provinces and eighteen strongholds, Stenai alone remains to them ; and Stenai is outside the kingdom."

It is almost certain that, if Mazarin had at this juncture acceded to the demand of the Parlement of Bordeaux for the recall of d'Épernon, governor of Guienne, against whose tyranny the Bordelais had been for months past in a state of semi-revolt, all armed resistance would have soon ceased, and he would have been able to relinquish his "government of armies" and give his undivided attention to Paris, where a reaction in favour of the imprisoned princes was beginning to set in which was causing him much uneasiness. But he persisted in his belief that the Bordelais were "seditious by nature" and that d'Épernon's recall would be prejudicial to the royal authority, with the result that when, at the end of May, the Princesse de Condé and the little Duc d'Enghien, accompanied by Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld and a number of the gentry of the South and their retainers, appeared before Bordeaux, the populace welcomed them with almost frantic enthusiasm, and Bordeaux and the greater part of Guienne were soon in open rebellion. The revolt in the South obliged him to go campaigning with their Majesties once more, although Turenne and the Spaniards in the Netherlands, who had entered into a formal alliance, had profited by the diversion in Guienne to advance into Champagne; and it was impossible to say what effect any substantial success on the part of the invaders might not have upon the state of affairs in Paris.

On June 29, 1650, the Cardinal set out, with the Court, for Guienne to join the Army of the South, commanded by that fervent Royalist the Maréchal de la Meilleraie. He departed with many misgivings, for not only was the party of the princes daily gathering strength in the capital, but, notwithstanding all his efforts to prevent it, the Frondeurs had succeeded in gaining great influence over the feeble Orléans, and Retz now

occupied the place once held by La Rivière in that prince's confidence and affection. He was somewhat reassured, however, by the hatred which both *Monsieur* and the Coadjutor cherished against Condé; while, as he had done everything that could reasonably be expected to satisfy the greedy friends of Madame de Chevreuse, he believed that he could reckon upon the duchess employing her influence to prevent any serious movement against him during his absence.

There was, however, one friend of Madame de Chevreuse whose demands had not yet been formally presented, but which were to cause Mazarin more embarrassment than those of all the others, and the refusal of which was to bring about the defection of the duchess and the fall of the Minister.

At the time of the arrest of the princes, Retz had declared to Mazarin, with feigned humility, that he did not desire a cardinal's hat, but this refusal was prompted by a motive very different from that which he professed. He was shrewd enough to perceive that, if he had accepted his nomination at such a moment, he would have brought himself into odium, for it would escape no one that he was being rewarded for his consent to the *coup d'état* of January 18. A little later, he again protested to the Minister that he did not wish to profit by recent events to obtain the purple. Nevertheless, towards the end of March, Mazarin learned from his spies that the Coadjutor was in secret communication with the Vatican, with the view of assuring himself of its approval, in the event of his being nominated for the cardinalate by Anne of Austria.

"The position of Retz at this period," writes his able biographer M. Chantelauze, "was the most false imaginable. He had, at the same time, engagements towards the Court and towards the people, and he was

unable ostensibly to serve the one without injuring himself with the other. He was obliged to manœuvre with the utmost care between these two powers: to play sometimes the part of Royalist, sometimes that of tribune of the people. Such was later the position of Mirabeau. From the Court Retz had a cardinal's hat to hope for, but it was from popular favour that he derived all his strength; and he was, besides, very careful to preserve it, even to the prejudice of the other. He trusted no more in the good faith of Mazarin than Mazarin could trust in his. He wished to live on his reputation of a disinterested man up to the moment when he was in full possession of the cardinalate, and he exercised the greatest care not to compromise himself in regard to the Court, while caressing as much as possible the people."<sup>1</sup>

But, after the departure of the Cardinal for the South, the Coadjutor decided that the moment had come to make known his aspirations. More than six months had now elapsed since the arrest of the princes, and no one therefore could accuse him of having sold his acquiescence in that measure for the coveted hat. He was supported by the Parlement, by the people, by Beaufort and a part of the Old Fronde, and by *Monsieur*, in whose favour he had replaced La Rivière; and Mazarin, menaced at once in the heart of the capital by the friends and agents of the princes, in the North by Turenne and the Spaniards, and in the South by the revolted Bordelais and their aristocratic allies, would find it difficult to refuse him anything.

At the beginning of August 1650, Retz confessed to Madame de Chevreuse and *Monsieur* the object of his ambitions. The duchess informed Laigues and Châteauneuf, who passed the news on to Le Tellier;

<sup>1</sup> *Le Cardinal de Retz et l'affaire du chapeau.*

and the Minister, in his turn, lost no time in warning his absent chief. He wrote that he had had an interview with Laigues, who had told him that the reason why the Coadjutor had not sought the cardinalate before was out of deference for his uncle, the aged Archbishop of Paris ; but now that that prelate was so ill that he was not expected to live more than a few weeks, he saw no objection to soliciting a hat which could not arrive from Rome until after his uncle's death. "This hat," the Coadjutor had said to Laigues, "must fall to me soon, when I shall be archbishop. This office and my influence will place me then in a position to cause so much trouble that the Queen will be obliged to accord it me by force. Is it not much better to procure me this now, and of her own free will?"

Le Tellier went on to say that he had visited Madame de Chevreuse, who had assured him that for some days past she had been suffering the most cruel anxiety, and that her fear of the evils with which the State was threatened prevented her from sleeping ; that she had had several conversations with the Coadjutor, and had found him very badly disposed towards the Court and full of suspicions of the intentions of the Cardinal. He had declared that, if he continued to support his Eminence, he would lose his influence, and that, when that occurred, the Cardinal would take vengeance upon him for his opposition in the past ; that he knew, from warnings that he had received from friends about the person of the Queen, that her Majesty was infuriated against him, because he had urged *Monsieur* to press for the removal of d'Épernon from the government of Guienne ; and that, in short, he believed that, to secure his own safety, he would be obliged to make common cause with the enemies of the Cardinal. Madame de Chevreuse had added that she had done everything



possible to bring him to a different frame of mind, but without success, and that she was convinced that the only means of dissipating his suspicions and maintaining him in his fidelity to his Eminence's interests was to give him the nomination he desired.

But Retz's desire was one which Mazarin was determined not to gratify. He detested the Coadjutor and knew that the only result of his elevation would be to make him the more dangerous, since he would then have nothing either to hope for or fear from the Government. Moreover, once invested with the purple, there would be no bounds to his restless ambition, and he would in all probability aspire to supplant Mazarin in the office of Prime Minister. "The Coadjutor," wrote Colbert to Le Tellier, "is a man whose ill-will it is impossible to doubt, as much towards the State and the Monarchy as towards the person of his Eminence. He is like a ship whose sails are extended. If there is little wind, it makes little progress ; if there is much, it does so in proportion. If the Coadjutor, having the will to do evil, is armed only with a knife, he does only as much harm as the knife is able to do ; but, if you give him a pistol or a sword, he will make use of them, and will do much more harm than with the knife. I employ the same comparisons as his Eminence has used. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to defer this proposition, and to elude it by gaining time, if one can find the means ; and that consists of two persons, his Royal Highness [Orléans] and Madame de Chevreuse." And he charged Le Tellier to inform Madame de Chevreuse that his Eminence placed but little reliance on the promises of Retz, and that "for less than his own absolute ruin " he was unable to accord what he demanded, but that he gave "*carte blanche*" to him (Le Tellier) to offer the Coadjutor "all that he could desire, save that."

However, Madame de Chevreuse continued to insist on the necessity of granting the nomination, pointing out that, by so doing, the Cardinal would assure himself not only of the support of the Coadjutor, but of that of Orléans as well, over whose facile mind Retz, as we have mentioned, had, since the disgrace of La Rivière, obtained great influence. On his side, Mazarin was resolved that no argument should induce him to consent, though, anxious above all things to avoid a rupture with the factious prelate during his absence from Paris, he excused himself from giving a definite answer for the present, on the ground that the affair was too important to be decided by correspondence, and that the Queen could not pronounce upon it until the return of the Court. He added that whether her Majesty's decision was favourable or unfavourable would depend upon the Coadjutor himself.

Madame de Chevreuse went to communicate the Cardinal's answer to Retz, and lost no time in informing Le Tellier of the result. "Madame de Chevreuse told me yesterday," writes the latter to Mazarin, "that she had acquainted the Coadjutor with the answer, and that he was at first very angry, but that subsequently he displayed more moderation and promised to conduct himself well, because he hoped by that to oblige the Queen to nominate him to be cardinal."<sup>1</sup>

Mazarin, however, had no faith in the Coadjutor's promises of good behaviour, since he had just learned of the intrigues which that personage had been carrying on during his absence. In August, profiting by the Guienne expedition, which had necessitated the withdrawal of a considerable portion of the troops on the northern frontier, the allies had laid siege to and reduced several places in Champagne, after which Turenne succeeded in

<sup>1</sup> Letter of September 5, 1650, cited by Chantelauze.

effecting a junction with the Archduke Leopold, and their united forces began to advance on Paris. Hocquincourt, with a part of the Army of the North, attempted to bar their progress, and entrenched himself at Fismes, on the Vesle ; but his camp was surprised and stormed, and he fell back, with some loss, to Soissons ; while Turenne's advance-guard, after pursuing him to the gates of the town, pushed on to La Ferté-Milon, only ten leagues from Paris.

The capital was in a state of consternation, and the municipal authorities met at the Hôtel de Ville, when it was decided that the gates should be closed and the town guarded, as had been done during the siege of 1649. The Duc d'Orléans and the Ministers, on their side, fearing that the enemy would at least press on to Vincennes and endeavour to liberate the princes, anxiously deliberated as to what steps should be taken in regard to them. Le Tellier, faithful to the instructions which he had received from Mazarin before his departure for Guienne, urged that they should be removed to Le Havre ; but such a proposal was unacceptable to the Frondeurs, since it would place the prisoners altogether in the power of the Cardinal ; and Retz and Beaufort demanded that they should be transferred to the Bastille, in which case they and their associates would become the arbiters of their fate. A third course was proposed by Châteauneuf, who, though fully resolved to supplant Mazarin whenever a favourable opportunity should occur, detested the Coadjutor, whom he regarded as a dangerous rival, and had no desire to play into his hands. His suggestion was that the prisoners should be transferred to Marcoussis, a château belonging to the Comte d'Entragues, eight leagues from Paris, on the road to Orléans, to reach which it would be necessary to cross both the Seine and the Marne, and which was sufficiently strong to resist an assault un-

supported by artillery. Retz, however, declared that, if his advice were not followed, there would be a rising of the populace, and, since *Monsieur* seemed inclined to side with him, it is probable that he would have carried the day, but for the intervention of Madame de Chevreuse, who warmly espoused the cause of Châteauneuf, "finding," writes the Maréchal d'Estrées, "that his reasons were more disinterested than those of the Coadjutor and M. de Beaufort."<sup>1</sup> Finally, after a long and heated discussion, which lasted for eight hours, the proposal of the Keeper of the Seals was adopted, and on the morning of August 29, the princes left Vincennes for Marcoussis, in charge of the Sieur de Bar, who had promised the Queen, before she set out for Guienne, to poniard them to the heart rather than permit them to escape.

The removal of the princes to Marcoussis deprived Turenne of any motive for advancing towards Paris, and he accordingly retreated to Neufchâtel, to rejoin the Archduke Leopold. The archduke sent to propose to the Duc d'Orléans to open a conference for peace, and to arrange the conditions in an interview between the two princes. It was merely a means to persuade the people that the artifices of the Cardinal alone prolonged the war, and that it would be easy, if he were dismissed, for the two nations to come to terms.

<sup>1</sup> The account given by the Maréchal d'Estrées of the duchess's action in this matter is confirmed by Châteauneuf, in a letter to Mazarin, dated August 30: "I am obliged to tell your Eminence that Mesdames de Chevreuse and d'Aiguillon have shown themselves very attached and impassioned for the service of the Queen. The former, after several debates in the presence of his Royal Highness [*Monsieur*], declared herself against the Coadjutor, who, seeing himself on the eve of separating from her, consented to the said change, to which he was always opposed, saying that, if he consented to conduct the princes elsewhere than to the Bastille, the people would raise barricades. But, thanks to God, that has not happened, and, now the thing is done, no one has spoken of it."

The Coadjutor and Beaufort pressed *Monsieur* urgently to accept these overtures without consulting Mazarin, "declaring that, if he refused, there would be a popular rising against him in the capital, because it would be believed that he desired to elude so favourable an opportunity for concluding peace."<sup>1</sup> The feeble prince yielded to their exhortations, and was on the point of setting out for Soissons, near which town a place was to be chosen for his interview with the archduke, when his wife, Marguerite de Lorraine, and Mlle. de Saugeon, jealous apparently of the influence which Retz had acquired over *Monsieur*, interfered. "Madame de Chevreuse told me," writes Le Tellier to Mazarin, "that she has seen *Madame*, who informed her that *Monsieur* intended to go to Soissons; that she begged her to ascertain if it were the Keeper of the Seals who was giving him this advice, or M. de Beaufort and the Coadjutor, and that, if it were the last, she would make a fine disturbance that evening, and that absolutely she would prevent *Monsieur* from undertaking this journey; that Mlle. de Saugeon, whom she [Madame de Chevreuse] saw afterwards, was altogether opposed to it, in so much that she did not believe that *Monsieur*, fortified by our advice, would wish to undertake it."

A strange spectacle, indeed, that of the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom dominated by the influence of women, and deciding according to the caprices of his little court the interests of France! For Gaston obeyed the wishes of his wife and Mlle. de Saugeon, and, to cover with a plausible pretext his tergiversations, demanded the advice of the council which had been appointed to assist him. It decided that he and the archduke could not themselves settle the articles of a treaty of peace, "because they were not sufficiently acquainted with these matters,

<sup>1</sup> Le Tellier to Mazarin, September 12, 1650, in Chéruel.

such being beneath the dignity of persons of their condition."<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of Madame de Chevreuse at this juncture is, at first sight, difficult to understand. On the one hand, we see her warmly supporting Retz's demand for a cardinal's hat, and seeking to oblige Mazarin to raise a most dangerous rival to a dignity equal to his own. On the other, we find her in strenuous opposition to the Coadjutor on the question of the fortress to which the captive princes were to be transferred from Vincennes, and again on that of the proposed conference between the Duc d'Orléans and the archduke, for there can be no doubt that she encouraged *Madame* and Mlle. de Saugeon to do everything possible to dissuade *Monsieur* from going to Soissons. Was she then playing a double game, as some writers have supposed? We are inclined to think that she was not, and that she was still faithful to the engagements which she had entered into with the Cardinal. If she supported Retz's demand, it was because she understood the character of that worthy better than Mazarin, and foresaw that, though his nomination to the cardinalate would probably be followed, sooner or later, by an attempt to supplant Mazarin as Prime Minister, a refusal would certainly entail his immediate secession from the Court and his alliance with the friends of the princes.

<sup>1</sup> Le Tellier to Mazarin, September 14, 1650, in Chéruel.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The Court at Fontainebleau—Intrigues of Retz—Madame de Chevreuse presses Mazarin for an immediate answer to the Coadjutor's demand, and advises him strongly to grant the nomination—A disguised refusal—Vain efforts of the Cardinal to pacify Retz—Madame de Chevreuse, convinced that Mazarin's fall is certain, decides to abandon him—The Cardinal sets out to join the army in Champagne—Victory of Rethel—Anne de Gonzague, Princesse Palatine—Her correspondence with Madame de Longueville at Stenai—Simultaneous overtures of the Princesse Palatine to Mazarin and the Old Fronde—Hesitation of the Cardinal—Alliance between the party of the Princes and the Old Fronde concluded—The Prince de Conti engages to marry Mlle. de Chevreuse—Fall of Mazarin.

**A**FTER a siege of more than three weeks, Bordeaux surrendered, a full and complete amnesty being accorded the citizens, while the Princesse de Condé, Bouillon, La Rochefoucauld, and their followers were permitted to retire to their estates, on an undertaking to lay down their arms, "and continue henceforth in fidelity and obedience." It was also agreed that d'Epemon should be temporarily suspended from his duties as governor.

Guienne pacified, Mazarin brought the Court to Fontainebleau, where he completed his preparations for an expedition to Champagne, by which he intended to overwhelm the only enemy left him to contend with (November 8). During the journey he was continually in communication with the Ministers relative to the pretensions of the Coadjutor. While awaiting the final decision on the question of the cardinalate, that prelate had demanded the title of chief of the deputation which

it was proposed to send to the archduke to treat for the general peace. When, however, he found that he was not among the deputies chosen by the Queen and Mazarin, he fell into such transports of fury that his servants were obliged to sit up with him for two nights, from fear lest he should do himself some injury.<sup>1</sup>

To escape a disturbance in Paris, for the enraged Coadjutor was indulging in all kinds of threats against the Government, Mazarin conferred upon him the title of plenipotentiary. But in the matter of the cardinal's hat, he was more than ever determined not to yield, though Madame de Chevreuse continued to importune him, saying that, if the nomination were accorded, Retz was prepared to enter into an engagement to go and reside at Rome for two years. "It is not," writes Le Tellier to the Cardinal, "that Madame de Chevreuse does not know that the Coadjutor is the most wicked man in the world, that he has no religion, and that there is no crime of which he is incapable. . . . But, as she is very incommoded by her health and desires to pass the rest of her life in peace and repose, she believes it necessary to sacrifice to the Coadjutor as one sacrifices to demons, in order to propitiate them ; and that if, by the favours that will be bestowed upon him, one can be assured of a year or two's tranquillity, that would still be a considerable gain." <sup>2</sup>

To which Mazarin, who complained bitterly of the close relations between the duchess and Retz, and of the support she was lending his pretensions to the cardinalate, replies : "If Madame de Chevreuse seeks only repose, as the Keeper of the Seals [Châteauneuf] says, she can certainly find it more honourably, and with more safety, and with greater advantages for her family, in the good

<sup>1</sup> Le Tellier to Mazarin, September 24, 1650, published by Chantelauze.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch of October 14, 1650, in Chantelauze.



graces of the Queen, and not in persisting (contrary to her duty, since she has promised the Queen and myself that, if the Coadjutor fails, she will be his greatest enemy) in wishing to remain closely allied with him, when he forgets nothing in order to prove himself the most wicked man in the world and to turn the whole kingdom topsy-turvy (*sens dessus dessous*) ; and certainly no one can be further removed from repose than one who would desire to be connected with the most singular and the most restless mind which the world perhaps contains.”<sup>1</sup>

In the meanwhile, the Princess Palatine, by far the ablest of Condé's supporters in Paris, had approached the Coadjutor, with the view of obtaining his consent to the liberation of the princes. Before, however, entering into an engagement on this point, which offered him, in case of failure, a prospect of assured vengeance against the Cardinal, Retz resolved to make one last attempt to capture the coveted hat. By skilful manœuvres, he had succeeded in arousing the jealousy of *Monsieur* against Mazarin, and in persuading him that his nomination to the purple was necessary to prevent the Minister from becoming a second Richelieu ; and the prince had warmly espoused the interests of his new favourite. Beaufort had also promised to use all his influence on his behalf ; and, fortified by their support and by that of Madame de Chevreuse, the Coadjutor assumed a most menacing attitude, and, in an interview with Le Tellier, declared that, though he was persuaded that Mazarin would not easily consent “to allow the hat to fall upon his head,” he was resolved to snatch it from him, by the threat of a new civil war.

Scarcely had the Court arrived at Fontainebleau, than Madame de Chevreuse sought an interview with the Cardinal, and, on behalf of the Coadjutor, pressed for

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of October 24, 1650, in Chantelauze.

an immediate answer. The duchess repeated the arguments she had already used, and pointed out that, with the support of the Coadjutor, Mazarin would dominate *Monsieur*, would have the Old Fronde on his side, and would triumph over the faction of the princes ; but that if, on the other hand, Retz, exasperated by the refusal of his request, were to ally himself with the Princess Palatine and the numerous party which supported Condé, it would be impossible for the Cardinal to make head against such powerful enemies. She also gave him to understand that Retz's desertion of his cause would be the signal for her own.

Mazarin, still determined not to yield, but desirous to avoid offending the duchess, professed himself only too anxious to oblige her and the Coadjutor, but dwelt upon the reluctance of the Queen and the hostility of more than one of the Ministers, and ended by offering to submit the matter to the Council, which course, he hoped, would enable him to throw the odium of a refusal upon others. The Council, as he had, of course, foreseen, pronounced energetically against the pretensions of Retz, and Châteauneuf even went so far as to advise the Queen to have both the Coadjutor and Beaufort arrested. But, far from adopting such a proposal, Mazarin, always anxious to temporize, caused the prelate to be informed that a definite decision would be deferred until the Queen's return to Paris.

Retz did not allow himself to be deceived by this disguised refusal, and, though the Cardinal endeavoured to pacify him by offering him, through Madame de Chevreuse, the rich abbey of Ourscamps and Saint-Lucien, the payment of his debts, and the office of Grand Almoner, he refused everything haughtily and prepared for war. "I would have refused," says he in his *Mémoires*, "if he had added a dozen cardinal's hats."

Madame de Chevreuse, on her side, also prepared to abandon the Minister whom she had so long supported, and who had so generously recompensed the assistance of her and her *protégés*. She would have much preferred to remain faithful to the Court, for she still retained something of her old affection for Anne of Austria, and Mazarin had, ever since her return to France, treated her with so much deference, and had been at such pains to secure her friendship, that she no longer entertained any personal feeling against him ; while, on the other hand, she detested the Condés of both sexes, and cared not how long the captivity of the princes might last. But she had no desire to find herself on the losing side, and exposed to the vengeance of those whose overthrow she had taken so prominent a part in bringing about ; and for some weeks she had foreseen what Mazarin, flushed with his victory over the insurgents of Guienne, refused to understand, that, unless the Cardinal could contrive to pacify Retz and draw still closer the bonds of the alliance between the Court and the Old Fronde, his fall was certain.

For, though the princes' faction might be worsted in the field, it was in Paris that the final issue of the conflict must be decided, and in Paris their party was daily gathering strength. When the prisoners were removed from Vincennes to Marcoussis, the sympathy which their long imprisonment and the heroism of the young Princesse de Condé had gradually aroused gave way to indignation. People began to declare that *Monsieur le Prince* was a martyr, and crowds flocked to Vincennes to see the room in which he had slept, the courtyard in which he had taken exercise, and the violets he had watered with his own hands. And now, on the very day of the Court's return to Paris, came the news that the Cardinal, fearing that the princes were no longer in safety at Marcoussis, had caused

them to be removed to Le Havre, under an escort of 1,200 men, commanded by the Comte d'Harcourt; and the popular indignation, artfully stimulated by their friends in Paris, redoubled in intensity.

And the party of the princes, she knew, would be prepared to bid high for her support. Already some tentative overtures had been made to her, and the possibility of a marriage between her daughter and the Prince de Conti had been hinted at. In leaving Mazarin for Condé, she had much to gain and little to lose.

Meanwhile, Mazarin, for the moment more occupied with the situation on the frontier than with the intrigues of Paris, had been completing the preparations he judged necessary for a successful campaign. On December 1, he quitted the capital to join the army in Champagne commanded by Du Plessis-Praslin, which on the 13th recaptured Rethel, which had been taken by Turenne in the preceding August, and on the following day utterly defeated that general in a battle some four leagues distant. The victory was followed by the surrender of Château-Porcien and the other places in Champagne held by the enemy, and by the end of the year there was not a Spaniard or a rebel left in the province, except at Stenai, whither Turenne had retired, and the siege of which it had been decided to postpone until the spring.

But where force had so signally failed, intrigue was to succeed, and in less than two months after the battle of Rethel the victorious Cardinal was to find himself in exile, and Condé was once more to dominate the Court of France.

For some time past an active correspondence had been carried on between Madame de Longueville, at Stenai, and the Princesse Palatine, in Paris, and it was largely owing to the efforts of these ladies and the agents they employed that the reaction in favour of the im-

prisoned princes in the capital had assumed so pronounced a form. Of the numerous letters which passed between them—one written by the Princesse Palatine is referred to as “the twentieth”—only four have, unfortunately, been preserved, two from the pen of each princess, but these are sufficient to throw a most valuable light on the complicated intrigues in progress during the early winter of 1650–1651, and, incidentally, on the character and occupations of the two noble friends and the morals of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Without Madame de Longueville's heroic instincts, or the courage and audacity of Madame de Chevreuse, Anne de Gonzague, Princess Palatine—or “the Palatine,” as she is generally called—nevertheless, possessed great qualities. She had inherited that talent for political intrigue for which her family had been for generations noted, and she well knew how to turn it to account. Unlike other feminine politicians of her time, she never permitted her judgment to be swayed by passion or prejudice. In the labyrinth of intrigue in which she moved, she was always quick to discover in every situation the end for which she must strive, and she pursued it with an activity, an address, and a persistency which evoked the admiration of all, and caused Retz to declare that “he believed she had as great a capacity for State affairs as Elizabeth, Queen of England.”

As a younger daughter, she had received a very moderate dowry, and had known the humiliation of dependence on the generosity of her elder sister, Marie, Queen of Poland.<sup>2</sup> She, therefore, desired, above all things, to become rich, and exacted a high price for her

<sup>1</sup> Victor Cousin, *Correspondance de Madame de Longueville avec la Princesse Palatine*, *Journal des Savants*, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Ladislas IV., and afterwards of her brother, John Casimir, Kings of Poland.

services. Nevertheless, though mercenary to the verge of avarice, she never betrayed a friend or failed in her word, and Madame de Longueville had in her implicit confidence.

Ever since the reduction of Bordeaux, the Princess Palatine appears to have recognised the futility of further armed resistance to the Government, and that the only hope of obtaining the liberation of the princes lay either in a reconciliation between their party and Mazarin, and a return on the part of the House of Condé to its policy before 1649, or in an alliance with the Frondeurs to destroy the Cardinal. She inclined strongly to the former course, and urged Madame de Longueville to consent to it, pointing out that, in the event of this alliance not being possible, a treaty with the Frondeurs was the only alternative. To cement the latter alliance, she suggested a marriage between the Prince de Conti and Anne de Rohan, second daughter of Madame de Montbazon, or, in default of that, one between that prince and Mlle. de Chevreuse.

Madame de Longueville, however, was of a different opinion. She had the strongest aversion to negotiate with the Cardinal, unless absolutely obliged to do so, and, gauging the feelings of Mazarin by her own, she expressed her conviction that he would never resign himself to a reconciliation with the party of the princes, unless to prevent an alliance between it and the Frondeurs; and it would, therefore, be wiser to open negotiations with the latter, by which means they would either compel the Cardinal to treat with the princes on terms advantageous to them, or, if he remained contumacious, to compass his overthrow. To bring this about, she declared herself willing to consent to the marriage between the Prince de Conti and Anne de Rohan, although she would prefer one between her brother and Mlle. de Chevreuse, not-

withstanding the somewhat dubious reputation which that damsel enjoyed.

"I am more favourably inclined," she writes, "to the other affair of which you speak to me; and the marriage of Mlle. Trasibule [evidently Mlle. de Chevreuse], although it can only be a clandestine one, would seem to be of the greatest importance. *It is therefore to this that we must adhere*, if that be possible, and remove from the mind of the fair damsel all the scruples which so bold an action might arouse there. She will not be the first who has risked something of her reputation in order to secure an establishment for life; and, further, the majority of her relatives will support her, and her lovers, particularly Patemas [the Duc d'Orléans]<sup>1</sup> and 95 [Retz], will, of course, be constrained to hold their tongues, on account of the influence of her husband, who will place her in a position where she need not fear slander. In short, I counsel this marriage, however clandestine it may be, and, if it is desired, I will even subscribe to it."

After the news of the battle of Rethel reached Paris, the Princess Palatine returned to the charge, and wrote to Madame de Longueville to press her to consent to negotiations being opened with Mazarin, pointing out the advantages to be derived from such an alliance, and assuring her that she was informed by common friends of herself and the Court party that the Cardinal would not be unwilling to treat with the princes. At the same time, taking into consideration the uncertainty of the political situation and the desire of the princes to secure at any price the termination of their captivity, which had already lasted nearly a year, she proposed to keep the Frondeurs as a second string to her bow, and advised that negotiations should be begun simultaneously

<sup>1</sup> In Victor Cousin's opinion, it is not necessary to take too literally the word "lover" as applied to Orléans.

with them, though without committing themselves too far.

Madame de Longueville, however, had not waited for this letter to decide that the time had now arrived when she could no longer afford to consult her own inclinations, and on the morrow of the defeat of Rethel had written to her friend, giving her full powers to act as she thought best, and promising "to subscribe to everything upon which she might resolve."

Having obtained from Madame de Longueville authority to treat with Mazarin on behalf of her husband and brothers, "the Palatine" determined to use every endeavour to persuade the Cardinal to renew with Condé the alliance which, up to the end of 1648, had been of such service to them both, and from which the Crown and France had derived such immense advantages. Only in the event of the failure of these negotiations, did she intend to conclude an alliance with Retz and his confederates, with whom, however, she was already treating, and who, aware that an alliance between Mazarin and the party of the princes would mean their own political extinction, were eager to anticipate him.

In her task the princess was ably seconded by La Rochefoucauld, whom she had summoned from his exile in Poitou and concealed in her house, since he was liable to be arrested, if discovered in the capital. That nobleman, having obtained a safe-conduct from Mazarin, had a secret interview with the Cardinal in his apartments in the Palais-Royal, and used every persuasion to induce Mazarin to set the princes at liberty and ally himself with their party. But the Minister was not to be denied his fall, and would give La Rochefoucauld no definite answer. Probably, he overrated the effect of the victory of Rethel and the triumphant career of the royal army on the frontier, upon internal politics, and imagined that, having



so signally worsted his enemies in the field, he could afford to ignore for a while their machinations in the capital, and follow his personal inclinations, which were as strongly opposed to subjecting himself again to the insolent dictation of Condé as to gratifying the ambition of a man as turbulent and dangerous as he considered Retz. He appears to have imagined, besides, that ere long he would be able to detach the vacillating Orléans from his alliance with the Frondeurs; while, singularly enough, though he had refused to be guided by the counsels of Madame de Chevreuse, he continued to trust her, and was confident that she would refuse to take part in any intrigues against himself. Any way, it is certain that his cunning for once failed him, and that, by neglecting to decide definitely, as he had twelve months before, between the two Frondes, he exasperated both and united them against him.

La Rochefoucauld and the Princess Palatine, believing that the Cardinal was tricking them, resolved to throw themselves into the arms of the Frondeurs, who were only too ready to receive them. Negotiations were accordingly pushed on, and on January 30, the same day on which the Queen informed the Parlement, in answer to that body's demand for the liberation of the princes, that they would be set at liberty when their partisans had laid down their arms, articles of alliance between the two Frondes were signed.

These articles were embodied in a general treaty and several separate personal treaties. The first stipulated that the princes should be set at liberty and Mazarin driven from office; also that Condé was not to make any changes in the Council without the consent of *Monsieur*. The private conventions guaranteed various advantages to the principal contracting parties. By one, it was agreed that the Duc d'Enghien should espouse one of the daughters of *Monsieur*, when the parties should

have reached a suitable age. Another guaranteed to Châteauneuf the post of Prime Minister, after the expulsion of Mazarin, and to Retz the support of the princes to obtain for him the coveted cardinal's hat. A third promised to Madame de Montbazon 100,000 écus, in return for which that lady engaged to control Beaufort and his followers in the interests of the princes. Finally, the Princess Palatine promised, "in the name and in virtue of the authority which she had received from the prince and Madame de Longueville, and engaged the faith and honour of M. le Prince de Conti that, so soon as he should be at liberty, he would espouse Mlle. de Chevreuse, in the name of our Holy Mother Church."

Events now marched rapidly. On February 1, Retz, on behalf of Orléans, who, with his usual timidity, had declined to make the announcement himself, informed the Parlement that his Royal Highness had decided to co-operate with them in securing the release of the princes. In the afternoon of the same day, there was a stormy interview between *Monsieur*, the Queen, and the Cardinal, and on the morrow Orléans, to whom, for the moment, Retz seems to have succeeded in communicating something of his own restless energy, informed Châteauneuf and Le Tellier that he should refuse to assist at the Council or return to the Palais-Royal so long as Mazarin remained there, and sent orders to the Provost of the Merchants and the sheriffs to place guards around the palace, to prevent any attempt on the part of the Queen to escape from Paris with the young King.

The Cardinal, now thoroughly alarmed, at length decided to treat with the princes, and despatched the Maréchal de Gramont to Le Havre. But this tardy negotiation served only to stimulate the hatred of his enemies, determined not to leave to him the credit of delivering Condé and of treating with him. On February 4,

the Parlement, exasperated to fury by the news that Mazarin had compared his opponents to the English revolutionaries, voted that their Majesties should be asked, not only to liberate the princes, but to dismiss the Cardinal. Anne, in despair, sent to summon Orléans to the Palais-Royal, willing to make any concession he might demand, if only she might retain her beloved Cardinal. But, for once, *Monsieur* was firm, and Mazarin, fearing that he might be arrested and delivered to his enemies, decided to bow before the storm and to leave Paris. On the night of February 6-7, he quitted the capital, and retired to Saint-Germain, whither he was followed by a decree of the Parlement "enjoining the Cardinal Mazarin, his relations, and foreign domestics to evacuate the kingdom of France within fifteen days."

Mazarin had hoped that the Queen and the young King would join him at Saint-Germain, when it was intended that they should retire into Normandy, now entirely loyal. But the Frondeurs, learning what was in the wind, raised the citizens, and their Majesties found themselves prisoners in their own palace; while the Cardinal, after a vain endeavour to conciliate the princes by personally releasing them from prison, slowly made his way to his exile at Brühl.

## CHAPTER XIX

Importance of the Conti-Chevreuse marriage project—The Queen, counselled by Mazarin, works to divide the coalition—Condé approaches the Court—Dismissal of Châteauneuf—Indignation of Madame de Chevreuse and the Old Fronde—Condé refuses to countenance the violent measures advocated by them—Rupture of the Conti-Chevreuse marriage by Condé—Exasperation of Madame de Chevreuse—She offers her services to Mazarin—Diplomacy of the Cardinal—Dissolution of the alliance between the two Frondes—Exorbitant pretensions of Condé—The Queen negotiates with Madame de Chevreuse and Retz—Proposal to assassinate *Monsieur le Prince*—Condé retires to Saint-Maur—Renewal of the alliance between the Court and the Old Fronde—Civil war begins—The return of Mazarin—Madame de Chevreuse remains faithful to the Court—Her negotiations with Charles IV. of Lorraine—She enjoys the friendship and confidence of Mazarin for the remainder of his life—She contributes to the ruin of Fouquet and the elevation of Colbert—Her last years.

THE alliance between the Old Fronde and the Court had survived for nearly twelve months; that between the two Frondes did not last as many weeks. Such a confederacy could not, from its very nature, be expected to be more than a temporary one, composed as it was of two parties actuated by purely selfish motives, whose jealousy and suspicion of each other were only exceeded by their hatred of the man whom they regarded as their common enemy. Nevertheless, its speedy dissolution must have come as a surprise both to its friends and its enemies.

And for this two persons were mainly responsible : Condé and his sister, Madame de Longueville. Neither had learned wisdom from adversity. Condé's year of confinement appeared only to have accentuated that

impatience of all control, that haughtiness of manner, and that contemptuous disregard for the feelings and opinions of others which he had always shown; and restored to liberty, in circumstances which seemed to promise him an almost undisputed ascendancy, he returned to Paris more than ever determined to carry matters with a high hand. As for Madame de Longueville, the admiration which her courage and devotion had aroused seems to have turned her head; her pride and haughtiness were almost unendurable, and, ignoring the lessons of the past, she exercised her influence over her brothers as freely and with as little discretion as before. The fatal errors into which they soon fell were, in a large measure, the result of her counsels, for she had none of the sagacity, none of the cool judgment of her friend the Princess Palatine, and did not hesitate to sacrifice their interests and her own under the sway of feminine passion.

The latter princess had of course foreseen the dangers which threatened the continuance of the coalition which she had been chiefly instrumental in forming, and it was with the idea of averting them that she had urged the marriage of the Prince de Conti to Mlle. de Chevreuse, which would unite the House of Condé to the great families of Rohan, Luynes, and Lorraine, and that of the Duc d'Enghien to a daughter of *Monsieur*. The question of a marriage between Beaufort and Mlle. de Longueville was also again discussed; but of the three projected alliances the first was immeasurably the most important. "It would give for ever the House of Condé to the Fronde, and the Fronde to the House of Condé," writes Victor Cousin. "For the Fronde was Madame de Chevreuse, who controlled, through her daughter, Retz, who, in his turn, controlled Orléans and the Parlement."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victor Cousin, *Madame de Longueville pendant la Fronde*.

But Condé had none of the qualifications necessary for the successful leadership of a coalition, which enable a man to work harmoniously with allies who are personally distasteful to him for the promotion of their common interests. He could not forget the part which Orléans and the Frondeurs had played in securing his incarceration, and was under no illusion as to the motives which had induced them to undo their own work. Very soon he began to weary of his connexion with a party which he had always regarded with dislike and contempt, and to draw towards the Court, lured thereto by the proposals of the Queen.

From Brühl, Mazarin continued to counsel the Queen, and urged her to spare no effort to separate the Houses of Orléans and Condé. "The safety of the State and of their Majesties," he writes to Servien, "depends upon the disunion of these princes, since their said Majesties, by choosing whichever of the two they judge most suitable, could dictate the law to the other, and could work with some promise of success for the re-establishment of the royal authority." And he recommends a *rapprochement* with Condé rather than with *Monsieur*, since the latter was governed by the Coadjutor, "who is bankrupt in honour and probity, and whose greatest pleasure consists in subverting the Monarchy."<sup>1</sup>

Secret negotiations were accordingly opened with Condé, and Servien and Lionne promised the prince, in the Queen's name, the government of Guienne, in place of that of Burgundy, and allowed him to hope that his brother Conti should receive the government of Provence, if the Comte d'Alais could be prevailed upon to exchange it for Champagne. These concessions would, of course, enormously increase the power of the House of Condé, and render the prince the virtual

<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 9, 1651, in Chéruel.

Sovereign of the South of France ; and it is evident, from Mazarin's correspondence, that the two Ministers, in their anxiety to gain Condé, had greatly exceeded the Cardinal's instructions.

On this understanding, Condé promised to raise no objection to the dismissal of Châteauneuf, whose perfidy had rendered him odious to the Queen, and the admission to the Council of Chavigny and the First President, Mathieu Molé, whom Mazarin had recommended to her Majesty. These important ministerial changes took place without a word being said to Orléans (April 3, 1651), and the indignation of that prince and the Frondeurs knew no bounds. At a meeting of the leaders of the coalition held at the Luxembourg that same night the most violent measures were advocated ; and Retz, urged on by Madame de Chevreuse, who was furious at the disgrace of Châteauneuf, offered, if *Monsieur* would give him but two hours to raise the people, to make him the absolute master of Paris.

Condé, however, while affecting to share the indignation of his allies at the conduct of the Queen, deprecated any resort to violence, and declined to take part in "a war of chamber-pots and cobble-stones." If *Monsieur*, he sarcastically added, felt that nothing but a resort to arms could wipe out this outrage to his dignity, he would retire to Burgundy and raise an army for his Royal Highness's service, leaving to him the privilege of exhibiting his courage at the head of the Paris mob. Then, bowing to the company, he withdrew, followed by his friends.

The meeting finally dispersed without any definite decision being arrived at, and, from that moment, it was obvious that the alliance which had constituted such a formidable menace to the royal authority had become one in name only. A few days later, an event occurred which



THE DUCHESSE DE CHEVREUSE AS A WIDOW  
 FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY FERDINAND





dissolved it altogether, and changed the relations between the party of the princes and the Frondeurs into active hostility.

We have spoken of the great importance attached by the Princess Palatine to the marriage projected between the Prince de Conti and Mlle. de Chevreuse, and it will be remembered that this project had been agreed to by Madame de Longueville, and that, in one of her letters to "the Palatine," she had declared in reference to it : "It is therefore to this that we must adhere." Moreover, Condé, as the head of his House, approved or seemed to approve of the match, and Madame de Chevreuse had adroitly succeeded in binding him by a fresh promise. When *Monsieur le Prince* paid her a formal visit after his return from Le Havre, she declared that she was unwilling to profit by a treaty signed in his absence, and when he was not free, and offered to release the family from their engagement ; but Condé, far from taking advantage of this apparently magnanimous offer, confirmed the treaty by fresh promises. Finally, the young Prince de Conti, who was either ignorant of, or inclined to treat as idle and malicious gossip, the very unpleasant rumours in circulation concerning the relations between the Coadjutor and his bride-elect, had not paid many visits to the Hôtel de Chevreuse before the charms of the fair Charlotte had completely subjugated him. He testified for her the most intense admiration ; he paid her a thousand attentions ; and, in short, showed himself not only willing, but positively impatient for the marriage.

On his side, Mazarin was fully alive to the danger to the royal authority and to his own prospects of a return to power which would result from such a marriage ; while, on the other hand, he foresaw that if the Condés could, by any possibility, be induced to break their

engagement, the resentment of Madame de Chevreuse and her friends would be such that an immediate rupture of the coalition must surely follow. We find him, therefore, writing to his confidants, impressing upon them the vital importance of preventing this union by every means in their power ; and in the first conference which took place between *Monsieur le Prince* and the Ministers, Servien and Lionne, the latter had intimated to Condé that the Queen strongly disapproved of the projected marriage. "But the prince," says La Rochefoucauld, "gave them to understand that the engagement he had entered into with Madame de Chevreuse was too important to seek expedients to break it."<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of March, Madame de Chevreuse and her daughter began to make preparations for the ceremony, and their hôtel was superbly decorated in anticipation of the event, among other adornments being three magnificent tapestries which had been removed from Mazarin's apartments in the Palais-Royal. However, after the ministerial changes of April 3, which had convinced the Frondeurs that there was a secret understanding between Condé and the Court, the duchess, who was well aware how greatly Anne of Austria desired to prevent the marriage, became seriously alarmed. She was, however, somewhat reassured by the attitude of the Prince de Conti, who, on April 10, "desirous of giving proofs of his constancy, offered to sign the marriage-articles"; and on the 14th Lionne wrote to Mazarin: "Madame de Chevreuse declares that she does not altogether despair of the marriage; she places some hope in the love of the Prince de Conti."<sup>2</sup>

However, the very next day the proposed marriage was abruptly broken off. Under date April 17, 1651, an anonymous correspondent of Mazarin writes to the

<sup>1</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

<sup>2</sup> Published by Chéruel.

Cardinal: "The marriage of the Prince de Conti is abandoned, the Queen having informed *Monsieur le Prince* and the Prince de Conti, the day before yesterday, that the latter must entirely renounce this intention, and that the marriage was altogether impossible. The Président Viole, who had been the negotiator of this alliance, was the same day (April 15) to see Madame de Chevreuse, on behalf of the two princes, to express to her the grief which they felt at the Queen's repugnance to the execution of this project, and to assure her that they hoped in time to obtain her consent, which she at present refuses them. This has the less surprised the said lady and all her faction, inasmuch as appearances already pointed very strongly to a rupture, it being a fortnight since these princes had visited the Hôtel Chevreuse.<sup>1</sup> Few persons complain of their conduct, every one being aware that the demand for this marriage was only a pretended reward for treason. After this, it would appear that Monsieur le Cardinal's tapestries will soon be taken down."

Retz gives the following account of the scene at the Hôtel de Chevreuse, when Viole came on his very delicate mission :

"On the following morning, as I was in Madame de Chevreuse's chamber, the Président Viole entered, very embarrassed, as it seemed to us. He discharged the embassy with which he was charged like a man who is ashamed. He swallowed one half of what he had to say, and we understood, from the other half, that he came to announce the rupture of the marriage. Madame de Chevreuse responded courteously. Mlle. de Chevreuse, who was dressing near the fire, began to laugh."

<sup>1</sup> Lionne, in a letter to Mazarin, speaks of a visit paid by Conti to the Hôtel de Chevreuse on April 11, on which occasion, however, Mlle. de Chevreuse was not at home.

Since it is obvious that the opposition of the Queen would have had very little weight with Condé if he had really desired this marriage to take place, the reasons which induced the prince to break thus abruptly an engagement to the fulfilment of which his family had twice committed itself has given rise to much speculation. Two of Condé's historians, Earl Stanhope and the Duc d'Aumale, seem inclined to attribute it to the repugnance of a proud and haughty nature to allow his brother to wed with a lady whose moral reputation was so very dubious. But, as we have pointed out in our biography of Madame de Longueville, though this was certainly the reason which he gave the young Prince de Conti, and which induced the latter to renounce a union for which he was sincerely anxious,<sup>1</sup> it was not the true one. The fact was that Condé had grown weary of his alliance with Orléans and the Frondeurs, and believed that he could secure greater advantages for himself by a reconciliation with the Government than he could hope to obtain with their assistance, for, though much might be extorted from the Queen by so formidable a coalition, there were many mouths to be fed, and the appetite of some of his allies for places and pensions was insatiable. Being, however, somewhat doubtful as to whether they would not be sufficiently audacious, even without the assistance of himself and his friends, to coerce the Government, he had waited to

<sup>1</sup> "Without revealing his intention to any one, he [*Monsieur le Prince*] went to the Prince de Conti. He began the conversation by rallying him on the greatness of his love, and concluded by telling him of the relations of Mlle. de Chevreuse with the Coadjutor, Noirmoutier, and Caumartin, and all that he believed most calculated to disgust a lover or a husband. He did not experience much difficulty in succeeding in his design; for, whether it was that the Prince de Conti believed that he was speaking the truth, or that he did not wish to show that he doubted him, he thanked him for an advice so salutary and resolved not to wed Mlle. de Chevreuse. He even complained of Madame de Longueville and the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, for not having warned him sooner of what people were saying."—La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

see what action they would take on the occasion of the dismissal of Châteauneuf before definitely separating from them. But when he perceived that, without his co-operation, they dared not resort to violent measures, he concluded that he would be perfectly safe in continuing his negotiations with the Court, and accordingly terminated both his brother's engagement and the alliance.

It is easy to imagine the indignation of Madame de Chevreuse when she recognised that she had been duped ; that she, who might have been basking in the sun of Court favour, had turned her back upon Mazarin and the Queen, and exercised all her skill and ingenuity to drive the Cardinal into exile and rescue the princes from prison, in order to receive so gross an affront ! But she was not the woman to waste time in useless regrets. The Condés were victorious for the moment ; but they were the veriest tyros in political intrigue compared with herself, and she was resolved that their hour of triumph should be a very brief one. In less than a week after the events we have just related, Mazarin was smiling complacently over the contents of a letter, a copy of one which had been written by Madame de Chevreuse to her confidant, the Marquis de Noirmoutier, and which had just been brought to Brühl by an agent of the marquis. And this is what he read :

" PARIS, *April* 20 [1651].

"It would occupy too long to set down here the rupture of my daughter's marriage in all its particulars. You will learn them from another source. This is merely to tell you that, being now free, I beg you to acquaint Monsieur le Cardinal with all speed that, in the present state of affairs at Court, there is an opportunity of serving him by means which are evident, provided that he bids the Queen place confidence in me, and that he keeps the

secret to himself. Monsieur le Cardinal can rest assured of being well served in the present conjuncture. You must press him to write without delay to the Queen and give you a speedy answer, after which he will be fully informed of everything.”<sup>1</sup>

The Cardinal had long since recognised the fatal error he had committed in giving himself two enemies at once, and all his efforts, as we have seen, had been directed towards dividing the forces arrayed against him. In this he had now succeeded, but he was well aware that the only sure means of preventing their reunion and securing his own return was to enter into alliance with one of them. He had at first inclined towards the party of the princes, believing, in common with his confidants in the Ministry, that Condé alone possessed the courage and authority necessary to overcome all opposition to his recall. But, though the prince had shown himself very disposed to accept the overtures of the Court, it was becoming apparent that nothing but the practical dismemberment of the State in his favour would ever induce him to lend himself to Mazarin's return; and, though he sighed for the great position he had lost, the Cardinal hesitated to receive it back on such terms.

In the circumstances, Mazarin decided to forget his grievances against Madame de Chevreuse and to accept her proposals. But he was too shrewd not to take every precaution in dealing with a faction whose perfidy he had experienced on more than one occasion; and the counsel which he now gave Anne of Austria was to negotiate with both parties, to hold each in check by means of the other, and to do everything possible to prevent their reunion.

The Queen followed his advice with her customary docility; and before the end of April the rupture between

<sup>1</sup> Published by Chéruel.

the Frondeurs and the party of the princes was complete, and the former allies had become irreconcilable enemies.

The error which had brought about the fall of Mazarin a few weeks before was repeated by Condé, and with precisely similar results. Mazarin had fallen because he essayed to dominate at once the Fronde and Condé ; Condé was ruined in imagining that he could dominate the Fronde and the Court.

Having broken so abruptly with the formidable combination which had rendered him such important services, it was obviously to the prince's interests to enter with as little delay as possible into close relations with the Court ; but this he hesitated to do, with the result that he presently found himself between two parties, both greatly embittered against him. Anne of Austria would certainly have been willing to go to great lengths to win over Condé and secure his consent to the return of her beloved Cardinal ; but the pretensions of the prince went far beyond anything that could possibly be granted him with any regard to the preservation of the royal authority, and Mazarin, to his honour be it said, refused to allow the Queen to sacrifice the interests of the Crown to his own. At the same time, acting always on the ex-Minister's instructions, Anne continued to delude Condé with false hopes, thus drawing him closer and closer to the Court, while exciting the alarm and jealousy of his former allies. But, once having satisfied herself that the breach between the two factions had gone too far to admit of any reconciliation, she began insensibly to draw back, and to raise all kinds of unexpected obstacles to the gratification of his ambition.

Too late, Condé recognised that he was being deceived, and, mortified and incensed, he resumed the imperious attitude and insolent tone which, two years before, had embroiled him with the Court. He ceased to visit the



Queen, but appeared frequently at the Luxembourg and in the street with a numerous retinue. At the suggestion of Madame de Longueville, he despatched La Rochefoucauld's brother-in-law, the Marquis de Sillery, to Brussels, ostensibly to arrange for the evacuation of Stenai, which the troops of the archduke had occupied after the departure of his sister and Turenne, but in reality to ascertain what assistance he might expect from the Spaniards, in the event of a fresh rupture with the Court. Mazarin, who did not doubt that Sillery's apparently innocent mission cloaked a much deeper design, wrote to the Queen, under date May 19, 1651, urging her to become reconciled with the Frondeurs. "Knowing, as one knows," he writes, "the hatred which *Monsieur le Prince* entertains for M. de Châteauneuf, Madame de Chevreuse, and the Coadjutor, and particularly against these last two, and which they entertain for him, one may say that it is necessary, in the present conjuncture, in order not to ruin the State . . . that every one should be united and act in concert as regards myself ; but they must be assured that the Queen proportions her gratitude according to the zeal with which they will serve her. By this means, the Coadjutor and Madame de Chevreuse will be encouraged to behave well, in order to recover the good graces of the Queen, and there is an appearance that they will be the more inclined to do so, since they will believe that the ambition and behaviour of *Monsieur le Prince* will disoblige their Majesties, and that they will thus avenge themselves for the evil that they pretend to have received from him."<sup>1</sup>

In conformity with Mazarin's instructions, Anne of Austria had several conferences with Madame de Chevreuse and Retz, in one of which she read to the prelate a letter from Mazarin, imploring her to give the Coadjutor everything which he could desire—the cardinalate, the post

<sup>1</sup> Published by Chéruef.

of Prime Minister, the apartments in the Palais-Royal, which his Eminence had formerly occupied—rather than yield to Condé's demands. It was an amusing little comedy, but, for the moment, it appears to have deceived Retz completely, and, in return for a definite promise of his nomination to the cardinalate, he declared that "he would compel *Monsieur le Prince* to leave Paris within a week."

Forthwith, the Coadjutor and Madame de Chevreuse, who had been promised that her daughter should be consoled for her *mariage manqué* by a union with Mazarin's eldest nephew, Paul Mancini—a youth of sixteen—who was to be created Duc de Nevers or de Rothelois, proceeded to raise the whole Fronde against Condé; and the prince found himself assailed by a stream of virulent pamphlets, some of which probably emanated from the fluent pen of Retz. Being, however, as yet unaware of the negotiations which were in progress between the Court and the Frondeurs, he treated these attacks with contempt and abated not one jot of his pretensions.

The new allies now deliberated upon the question of having Condé arrested; but they were unable to agree upon the manner in which this should be carried out, for, as the prince had ceased to visit the Palais-Royal, no opportunity was likely to be afforded the Court of repeating the *coup d'état* of the previous year. This project abandoned, a most atrocious proposition was made to the Queen—nothing less than that Condé should be assassinated. Madame de Motteville asserts that the Coadjutor was its author, and that Anne was so shocked that she ordered the conferences which she had charged Lionne to hold with Retz, at the house of the Comte de Montrésor, to be broken off. On the other hand, Retz assures us most emphatically, in his *Mémoires*, that this sinister proposition was made to the Queen by the Maré-

chal d'Hocquincourt ; that her Majesty approved of it ; and that it is to himself and to Madame de Chevreuse that the credit of its rejection belongs.

It seems, however, in the highest degree improbable that Madame de Motteville, one of the best informed of all contemporary chroniclers and invariably honest and temperate in her judgments, would have made so grave an accusation unless she had been very sure indeed ; nor is the contemplation of such a crime in any way inconsistent with the character of a man who confesses, in his *Mémoires*, to have been a party to one of the most sinister conspiracies against the life of Richelieu, or of a woman who had been the accomplice of Chalais, who had instigated Beaufort to assassinate Mazarin, and who was, at this moment, inflamed with resentment against Condé, owing to the gross affront he had put upon her.

However that may be, Condé received warning that his liberty, if not his life, was in danger. He despised death, but his recent experiences had inspired him with an inconceivable dread of imprisonment, and, in the night of July 5-6, he quitted Paris and took refuge at his Château of Saint-Maur, situated some two leagues from Paris, whither he was followed by his principal partisans. Induced to return by the assurances of the Queen that nothing was intended against him, he insisted on the dismissal of Le Tellier, Servien, and Lionne—the “valets of Mazarin,” as he designated them—and his demands became so outrageous and his conduct so insolent that, in the middle of August, Anne of Austria decided to transform the understanding which she had for some weeks past with the Frondeurs into a definite alliance, and articles of agreement were accordingly drawn up and signed. They provided that the Frondeurs, in order to maintain their popularity with the people, should continue to denounce Mazarin in the Parlement, until they judged

that the time was ripe for declaring openly in his favour, although, in the meanwhile, they would work in secret to promote his recall ; Châteauneuf was to become Prime Minister, though the Seals were to be given to Molé ; La Vieuville, father of the Chevalier de la Vieuville, lover of the Princess Palatine, was to be Comptroller-General ; Retz was to be nominated to the cardinalate ; while Paul Mancini, after blossoming into a duke, was to wed Mlle. de Chevreuse. Madame de Chevreuse, Retz, and Châteauneuf agreed to do all in their power to induce *Monsieur*, who was as usual in a pitiable state of uncertainty, to detach himself definitely from Condé.

It is not a little singular that, though all the parties to this treaty were acting in bad faith, circumstances proved too strong for them, and nearly all its provisions were realised. The only article which was not fulfilled was the clause which provided for the marriage of Paul Mancini and Mlle. de Chevreuse, of which death prevented the execution.

Being now assured of the co-operation of the Frondeurs, the Queen launched against Condé a declaration, in which she accused him of contempt for the royal authority, criminal alliances with the enemies of the realm, and a desire to subvert the State. These charges led to a repetition of the scenes at the Palais de Justice which had marked the trial of Retz and Beaufort eighteen months before, and the Coadjutor narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of Condé's friends.

The charges against the prince were abandoned, but the Queen postponed his formal exoneration until after the proclamation of Louis XIV.'s majority, which was to take place on September 6, when the young monarch would complete his thirteenth year. In consequence, Condé declined to assist at that important ceremony, and, on the King's refusal to defer the ministerial changes

which had been agreed upon in the alliance between the Court and the Frondeurs, retired to his government of Berry and "drew the sword."

From Berry, Condé proceeded to Bordeaux, and the city and the greater part of the province at once rose in revolt. Having decided to assume the offensive, he at first carried all before him in the South-West, but his troops were much inferior in numbers to the Royalists, and by the end of the year he had been forced to fall back to the Garonne. The sudden reappearance of Mazarin upon the scene in the following January reanimated the hopes of the princes; the Parlement, which, on December 4, had issued decrees proclaiming *Monsieur le Prince* and his principal adherents "attainted and convicted of high treason and *lèse-majesté*," now voted that this sentence should be suspended and renewed its old decrees against Mazarin; *Monsieur*, with whom Condé had been for some time negotiating, believing that he had been the dupe of the Queen, concluded an alliance with him; and, after the retirement of Châteauneuf, whom Mazarin speedily contrived to get rid of, Beaufort and most of the Frondeurs also declared for Condé. As for the Coadjutor, he played fast and loose with both parties, through fear of losing his cardinal's hat, and informed the Queen that he would make no terms with Condé, if his nomination were not revoked, but would don the prince's colours the very next day, if she even threatened its revocation.

In this difficult conjuncture, Madame de Chevreuse found herself once more called upon to choose between Mazarin and his enemies. But hatred of Condé was still the predominating sentiment in her mind, and, besides, she was convinced that, in the end, the Cardinal must triumph over all opposition. That this triumph came so soon was in a great measure due to her assistance, for, remaining in Paris and skilfully disguising her sympathies

from all but the few personal friends who had remained faithful to the Court, she was enabled to furnish Mazarin with most valuable information concerning the state of affairs in the capital. When Châteauneuf, greatly mortified by the turn of events, returned to Paris, the duchess speedily brought him back to his allegiance, and, with his aid, rendered an invaluable service to the royal cause.

At the end of May 1652, her old admirer Charles IV. of Lorraine, who, in the previous January, had signed a treaty with Orléans and Condé, entered France at the head of 10,000 mercenaries, and advanced towards Paris, murdering, pillaging, and burning. Had he carried out his engagements, the war might have been indefinitely prolonged; but Mazarin knew that Madame de Chevreuse still retained a considerable influence over the prince; that the latter's only desire was to fill his coffers; and that he would much prefer an advantageous arrangement with the Court to risking his army of bandits—his sole fortune—against the royal troops. He therefore engaged Madame de Chevreuse to persuade the duke to delay the advance of his army, which he consented to do, and, when he should arrive in Paris, to negotiate a treaty with him, in conjunction with Châteauneuf, who was empowered to sign it on behalf of the King.

In this mission, Madame de Chevreuse succeeded admirably, carrying on her negotiations with Charles IV. under the very noses of the Frondeurs, who, aware of their old intimacy, appeared to have entertained no suspicion as to what was in progress. Finally, when all was arranged, Mlle. de Chevreuse, one fine evening, drove the duke, disguised as a woman, to Châteauneuf's house, where a treaty was signed, by which it was agreed that the Royalists should raise the siege of Étampes, to secure which Charles IV. had the effrontery to declare to Condé had been the sole object of his expedition,

and that the duke should then withdraw his troops to Flanders. By June 10, the army from whose assistance the Frondeurs had expected so much was on the road to the frontier, and, three weeks later, Condé, forced back upon Paris, was completely defeated by Turenne in the sanguinary combat of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

In this engagement, Paul Mancini, the destined husband of Mlle. de Chevreuse, received a mortal wound, to which he succumbed two days later ; and, by a singular coincidence, a few weeks later, Charlotte de Lorraine, seized by a sudden and fatal illness, followed him to the grave. But, though Madame de Chevreuse was never to be connected by marriage with the Cardinal, who, before the close of the following winter, was once more re-established at the Palais-Royal, to remain, until the hour of his death, the absolute ruler of France, she did not fail to reap substantial advantages from the services she had rendered him at so critical a time. Like Richelieu, he had always combated her with reluctance, and, like him, he had always entertained a very high opinion of her capabilities, and, as his correspondence shows, he consulted her continually and was frequently guided by her counsels. The credit and consideration which were now hers—for to possess the friendship of the all-powerful Minister was to enjoy the favour of Anne of Austria and the young King—increased after Mazarin's death, since she had early divined the great qualities of Colbert and worked for his elevation and for the ruin of his rival Fouquet. Anne of Austria, though, Madame de Motteville tells us, she regarded him as "a great robber," was very partial to Fouquet, because, whatever the condition of the Treasury, he had always taken care that her dowry and the considerable pensions which Louis XIV. had accorded since his majority should be punctually paid ; but the duchess employed all her old energy and

skill to deprive the *Surintendant* of the Queen-Mother's protection, and she succeeded. "Madame de Chevreuse terminated thus her political career, in intriguing for a good cause," observes Henri Martin. "It was perhaps the first time in her life that this had happened to her, and it is just to add that the public interest counted for nothing in her determination."<sup>1</sup>

Some five years later, the haughty but judicious lady cemented her friendship with Colbert by marrying her grandson, the Duc de Chevreuse, to the Minister's eldest daughter, Jeanne Marie Colbert.

Madame de Chevreuse out-lived all whom she had loved—Anne of Austria and Queen Henriette of England, Lord Holland and Charles IV. of Lorraine, Châteauneuf and Laigues—and died on August 12, 1679, in her eightieth year. Towards the end of her life, following the example of her famous rivals in the political arena, Madame de Longueville and the Princess Palatine, she became very devout, and withdrew to a modest house at Gagny, near Chelles, where she occupied her last years with religious exercises and works of charity. On her death-bed, she gave directions that she should be buried in the simplest possible manner in the parish church of Gagny and that no funeral oration should be pronounced. Her wishes were duly observed, and the remains of the most celebrated *intrigante* of modern times rest under the southern aisle of the little church, the spot being marked by a black marble slab, bearing the following inscription :

"Here lies Marie de Rohan, Duchesse de Chevreuse, daughter of Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon. She married *en premières noces* Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes, and *en secondes noces* Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Chevreuse. Humility having caused all the grandeur of the age to die in her heart, she forbade the revival at her

<sup>1</sup> Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*.



death of the least token of this grandeur, which she wished to bury beneath the simplicity of the tomb, having given orders that she should be interred in the parish of Gagny, where she died at the age of seventy-nine years, the 12th of August 1679.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Le Beuf, *Histoire de la ville et de tout le diocèse de Paris* (Paris, 1754-1758).

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